

HEROIC ADVENTURES

DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS

SWØRD CØAST GAZETTEER



QUILL & CAULDRON

**“THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS.
NOT WITH A BANG BUT A WHISPER.”**

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Disclaimer: The authors of this gazetteer promise that Vecna the Whispered One had zero involvement in its creation. We certainly didn't do it under duress or with the ulterior motive of tricking adventurers to reveal themselves.

FOREWORD



WELCOME TO THE DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS:

SWØRD CØAST GAZETTEER, a setting guide for a Sword Coast where everything in the world has gone wrong. In all the possible alterna-

tive timelines, this one is the darkest, but that doesn't mean it's beyond redemption. There's always hope for good to emerge victorious at the end of the day.

I have countless people to thank for this project, starting with Scott, who approached me via email and patiently endured when I strapped explosives to this project and blew it to thirty times the original size. It's thanks to him (or maybe his fault) that this whole thing exists. Secondly, I cannot understate the herculean task that I threw at the editors. The dutiful work and unparalleled patience of both Laura and Robert have taught me dozens of lessons I shall carry onto all future projects. So they have my wholehearted thanks!

My last thanks is to you, the reader: in picking up this product, you've validated the hours we've spent lovingly putting this all together. I hope you find it deeply inspiring, something you and your party will enjoy.

— Matthew Whitby



ON THE COVER

In this illustration by Raluca Marinescu & Marc Altfuldisch, Vecna stands victorious, his cosmic malevolence leaving Toril in ruins as he prepares to conquer all of the multiverse.

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CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO THE DOOMED SWORD COAST

LONE ADVENTURERS, SCATTERED FROM THE FROZEN TUNDRA OF ICEWIND DALE TO THE RISEN NECROTIC CITY OF WARLOCK'S CRYPT, SHARE NOTHING BUT THE BLOODY RED SKIES ABOVE THEM. A SOLEMN PALADIN KNEELS IN SUPPLICATION TO THE FIVE-HEADED STATUE OF TIAMAT, THE GOD-DRAGON THAT TAKES TO THE SKIES EACH DAY. A DECEITFUL ROGUE CREEPS THROUGH THE COBWEBBED CORRIDORS OF THE LICH-CLAIMED CANDLEKEEP, SEEKING TREASURE AND KNOWLEDGE IN EQUAL MEASURE. A HAGGARD WIZARD, FEELING THE SEA BREEZE AGAINST HER BRAIDED LOCKS, HAZILY RECALLS WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE VECNA THE WHISPERED ONE EMERGED. THEY ALL DO WHAT THEY MUST TO SURVIVE IN A LAND THAT IS WELL AND TRULY DOOMED.



THE WORLD OF THE DOOMED SWORD COAST

is one of disaster and destruction. In the ancient battle of good versus evil, evil won. But evil is often evil's own undoing—doubly so when the world

is filled with competing factions with clashing ambitions. If it's not trapped gods, tyrannical dragons, or endlessly ambitious liches, then it's the small everyday evils that further the corruption of this land.

Traversing the Sword Coast has never been entirely safe, but today, its dangers are unparalleled. Desperate bandits, intelligent undead, and itinerant mercenaries lurk in every shadow. For those who lived in the Sword Coast's golden age, it now bears little resemblance to the life they once knew. Scattered around these pages lie the haunting remarks of the Forgotten Realms' very own traveling guide, fountain of lore, and now resident ghost: Volothamp Geddarm.

USING THIS BOOK

This gazetteer is an introduction to the Doomed Sword Coast, an alternate reality of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Forgotten Realms setting. It outlines the key locations, factions, and day-to-day life of the region—but in the Doomed Sword Coast's timeline, everything went wrong. This book empowers both players and Dungeon Masters in creating characters and adventures in a land overwhelmed by evil.

Chapter 1 describes life in the Doomed Sword Coast, the worst of all possible worlds in the Forgotten Realms multiverse.

Chapter 2 outlines the six major factions of the Sword Coast: their rulers, goals, and aspirations. It also explains what life is like in each faction and how a character might join them.

If you are reading this: I am deceased. Please, hold your tears and exasperated gasps, for I assure you, however bad you might feel, I feel considerably worse. My demise was not as I had planned; which is to say, I wasn't nestled beside a fire, surrounded by my dearest friends as the long night gently takes me. I vaguely recall screaming in a rather unflattering manner. But I digress!

You may have lost a chance at an idyllic life, adventurer, but at least you're privy to the contents of this gazetteer, which handily addresses how the world became doomed, offers my impeccable advice on how to fix it, and outlines all the places and factions you need to avoid if you want to survive. I hope you enjoy the knowledge and wisdom within this gazetteer—because I assure you, you will not enjoy life in the Doomed Sword Coast!

My business on this mortal coil is far from complete: I still have research to conduct and stories to tell. The Sword Coast—nay, the world—has shifted in a most disastrous way. If anything, it needs scholars like me more than ever. I'll be damned if I let death stop me!

Take heed of my words, lest you share my fate!

Your friendly ghost, Volothamp Geddarm

Chapter 3 details locations across the Sword Coast and how they've been horrifically warped as a result of numerous cataclysmic events.

Chapter 4 provides adventure and campaign hooks a Dungeon Master can use for a few would-be saviors... or a self-interested band of mercenaries.

Chapter 5 introduces character options. This chapter includes subclasses and backgrounds unique to the Doomed Sword Coast setting, suggestions on how to adapt existing backgrounds to the setting, and ideas for giving characters secret backstory elements (as introduced in *Rime of the Frostmaiden*).

CONSENT IS KEY

An evil campaign isn't for everyone. It is of the utmost importance that any themes have been discussed and approved by everyone at the table to ensure that everyone has a good time. If you haven't discussed these themes with your group beforehand, sit down to have the discussion of what "evil" is expected.

Even if you've discussed it previously and everyone approved it, if a player expresses discomfort during play, pause a moment to check in. It's perfectly okay to rewind, reset, and pick up a different story thread. Nothing is more important than player safety.

Chapter 4 of *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* provides guidance on safe, consensual play. You may also appreciate the free resources in the *TTRPG Safety Toolkit* (by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk) and *Consent in Gaming* (by Sean K. Reynolds and Shanna Germain).



THE SWORD COAST IS BRIMMING WITH DANGER LIKE NEVER BEFORE

LIVING IN THE DOOMED SWORD COAST

What is it like to live in the Doomed Sword Coast? Well, it isn't pleasant. Life outside any of the major faction-ruled cities (which, depending on who you're aligned with, can be disastrous in itself) is fraught with suspicion and fear, and anyone could be an agent of evil looking to sell you out for their own benefit. This section outlines some of the most important things to know when venturing across the Doomed Sword Coast.

WORSE CASE SCENARIO REALIZED

Imagine the worst possible ending for each published *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* fifth edition adventure path all happening one after another: *Tyranny of Dragons*, *Princes of the Apocalypse*, *Out of the Abyss*, *Tomb of Annihilation*, *Storm King's Thunder*, *Descent into Avernus*, and *Rime of the Frostmaiden*. In each adventure, those supposed heroes were slain in their conquest or never answered the call for aid. Throughout the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS** Gazetteer, you'll find summaries of those terrible outcomes woven into the history of this world.

This apocalyptic retelling of the famous *Forgotten Realms* is for every D&D player, from those who've dutifully completed all the hardcover adventures, to those who haven't touched a single one. In a universe of multiple planes of existence with endless possibilities, this is the alternate reality that adventurers fear, one that even the greatest heroes can't easily undo.

VECNA'S DOOMED LAND

Most of the Doomed Sword Coast's inhabitants believe the series of disasters to be unrelated, merely tragic coincidence. However, the truly observant might see the thin thread connecting each and every event to an evil mastermind, an entity with mastery over the darkest secrets that puppeteers events in their favor. For the Doomed Sword Coast, this figure is none other than the Undying King, the Whispered One, the Arch-Lich: Vecna.

A lich who ascended to godhood, Vecna authored the *Book of Vile Darkness*. In a happier timeline, he was merely the *former* owner of the infamous artifacts known as the *Eye of Vecna* and *Hand of Vecna*, but in the Doomed Sword Coast, he wields them today. His agents nudged each and every disaster to bring about his resurrection. Despite instigating the Sword Coast's downfall, Vecna has yet to fully claim it as his own. In his egotism and arrogance, he views rivals like Tiamat or the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye as mere hurdles to be tackled in time, believing his victory to be all but guaranteed.

I vaguely recall saying that the "death curse" would be the death of me... I was too smart for my own good, it seems.

- Volo

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Year	Related Hardcover	Events in the DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS
1485	<i>Out of the Abyss</i>	• Demonic hordes consume the Underdark and their demon lords cross into the Material Plane. Thanks to ceaseless infighting, none of them invade the surface world. • Zyggtmoy, the Demon Queen of Fungi, unites with the sentient fungal growth known as Araumycos, becoming Zuggtmycos. • The only surviving humanoid civilizations are the illithid city of Oryndoll, the drow settlement of Undrek'Thoz, and the duergar bastion of Gracklstugh.
1489	<i>Hoard of the Dragon Queen and Rise of Tiamat</i>	• The red dragon Wymspeaker, Severin Silrajin, gathers the five parts of the <i>Mask of the Dragon Queen</i> and frees Tiamat from Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells. As “thanks,” Tiamat immediately devours him. • Tiamat wipes out the Lord’s Alliance, Order of the Gauntlet, and Emerald Enclave. • The Dragon Queen, disdaining masks in her image and hoping to make it difficult for Vecna to control her, orders the <i>Mask of the Dragon Queen</i> to be split back into its five parts.
1490	<i>Tomb of Annihilation and Storm King’s Thunder</i>	• The Soulmonger is emptied, allowing Vecna to return and declare himself God-King of the Forgotten Realms. • Vecna descends on Waterdeep with the assistance of the Zhentarim, claiming the city. • The giant god Annam All-Father shatters the Ordning, the social structure of all giants. • The stone giants sequester themselves away in Deadstone Cleft. • The hill giants declare themselves mountain giants and claim a monolithic city across the rolling hills north of the Dessarin Valley. • From Ironslag, the fire giants raise the colossal construct named Vonindod. • The cloud giants raise their castles further into the skies, utterly isolating themselves. • The frost giants align with Auril, wrapping Icewind Dale in permanent winter. • Losing the Maelstrom and their King, the storm giants lead a nomadic life without a home or the means to create one.
1491	<i>Princes of the Apocalypse</i>	• The Princes of Elemental Evil are ushered from their realm into the Forgotten Realms. • All four elemental cults unite under the banner of the Elder Elemental Eye, a false persona created by Tharizdun, the deity who formed the Abyss. • The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye terraforms Dessarin Valley into their new home, which they call the Throne of Primordial Unity. • Vecna returns Tharizdun to the Material Plane, only to imprison the god in the illithid-claimed Silverymoon.
1492	<i>Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden, Waterdeep: Dragon Heist, and Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage</i>	• The Frostmaiden casts her spell to freeze the North. • Xardorok Sunblight claims Icewind Dale for the duergar. Their construct, the chardalyn dragon, burns down the Ten Towns. They have not learned that their demigoddess Deep Duerra is actually the devil Asmodeus in disguise. • Manshoon loots the Vault of Dragons. • The Doom Raiders are forced out of Waterdeep. • The Cassalanter fail to save the souls of their children. • Jarlaxle flees Waterdeep aboard his ship, the <i>Scarlet Marpenoth</i>. He founds Qu’madosfan Delmah with the Bregan D’aerthe. • Halaster Blackcloak transports the Undermountain into its own demiplane.
1494	<i>Descent Into Avernus</i>	• Both Baldur’s Gate and Elturel are dragged into Avernus. • Zariel successfully reclaims and destroys the <i>Sword of Zariel</i>. • Bel does not rise to contest Zariel’s rule. • The demon lords and Tiamat are both too preoccupied with the events of <i>Out of the Abyss</i> and <i>Rise of Tiamat</i> to invade Avernus. • Devils claim Baldur’s Gate, rename it Helldoor’s Gate, and use it as a warfront to repel the demonic hordes.
1495 to 1500	Present day	• Vecna’s claim on the Forgotten Realms remains unquestioned, tightening his grip over the far corners of the Sword Coast. • Vecna repurposes the dwarven strongholds as demonic deterrents, funneling demons towards Helldoor’s Gate.

SCHEMES UPON SCHEMES

Though the world is ruled by evil, that doesn't mean its evil leaders all get along. The countless competing factions all have their hearts set on clashing goals—but some of these are centuries in the making, and one wrong move could ruin everything. For example, Vecna's ongoing schemes, which might not reach fruition for many mortal lifetimes, include:

- ☠ Gathering the fifty Nether Scrolls that outline the core of magical theory.
- ☠ Manufacturing the means to see Tiamat slain or trapped in the Nine Hells once more.
- ☠ Uncovering and destroying all Netherese Obelisks, capable of altering reality on a grand scale.
- ☠ Permanently cutting off communication to all other pantheons, then outright destroying them.
- ☠ Ultimately, controlling the entire multiverse.

OPTIONAL RULE: NEVER-ENDING DEATH CURSE

During the events of *Tomb of Annihilation*, the demilich Acerak forged an artifact known as the *Soulmonger*. Though brave heroes quested to destroy it, they failed. Today, Vecna possesses this fell artifact, feeding upon the souls of the dead—and the power of the resurrected—not only within the Doomed Sword Coast, but from all across Faerûn.

If you'd like to emphasize the hopelessness of the Doomed Sword Coast, when Vecna came into possession of the *Soulmonger*, he maintained the death curse and rendered all resurrection magic temporary, as the death curse drains the resurrected day by day. Liches eventually forged means to keep souls within their phylacteries—at least, those liches who didn't quickly succumb to the death curse.

The entire world and its humanoid inhabitants are under these effects of the death curse:

- Any Humanoid on the planet that has been brought back from the dead begins to waste away. Its hit point maximum decreases by 1 every midnight until the *Soulmonger* is destroyed. If a Humanoid's hit point maximum drops to 0, it dies. Traveling to another world or plane does nothing to halt the wasting effect once it has begun.
- A Humanoid whose hit point maximum is reduced can't increase or restore it, regardless of whether it was reduced by the *Soulmonger* or by some other life-draining effect, such as the touch of a wight, wraith, or similar creature.
- If a Humanoid dies anywhere on the planet, its soul becomes trapped inside the *Soulmonger*. Only the destruction of the *Soulmonger* can free the trapped soul.
- Any spell that breathes life into the dead (including *revivify*, *raise dead*, *resurrection*, and *true resurrection*) automatically fails if cast on a Humanoid whose soul is trapped in the *Soulmonger*.
- Spells like *speak with dead* and similar magic function as usual. The death curse has no effect on preexisting ghosts or spirits.

SECRETS GALORE

Vecna's rivals desperately hide their weaknesses from the evil god of secrets. Influential mortals are blackmailed or corrupted into service—perhaps they keep a shrine to a god thought to be dead, possess knowledge some faction could exploit, or want to fight evil to carve out a haven for goodness. Secrets are the new currency of the doomed world.

Vecna himself holds what may be the greatest secret of all: he has discovered a way to dampen magics that communicate with other planes. Most of the Sword Coast has been fooled into believing their gods have abandoned them, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Should this well-guarded secret be revealed—and proven—it would usher in Vecna's undoing. Imagine the pantheon of gods returning to see the devastation wrought across their followers, temples, and the entire world. Vecna's machinations worked not against any single god, but them all, and despite the power he has amassed, he's unlikely to withstand the collective ire of a unified pantheon of gods. Some brash or justice-bound deities like Lathander and Tyr may seek to confront Vecna directly, whereas others might empower remaining followers to uproot the Whispered One's seats of power. The rallying cry of the gods' return would be no mere beacon of hope for the realms, but the burning inferno of a just revolt.



OPTIONAL RULE: A LAND WITHOUT GODS

Although the faithful can't commune with their gods, this doesn't mean that paladins and clerics are unable to cast their spells. Player characters are exceptional, chosen by extraordinary forces to have abilities that common folk don't.

An adventurer of faith begins with a weak connection to their god that slowly improves as they grow stronger. Consider implementing a renown system for their deity (as described in chapter 1 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Whenever a character acts in accordance with their god's teaching, their connection begins to strengthen. This allows for a climactic moment when the adventurer first hears words from their god.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVENTS

How should I, Volothamp Geddarm, best describe the series of events that led to the Sword Coast's downfall? Well, it certainly isn't brief, but I shall do my utmost to summarize, condense, and synopsise the many moving parts. It happened all rather quickly, where the cataclysmic outcome of one event set other ruinous events in motion. But, as it is known, it is best to start at the very beginning.

Everything truly started its descent when the so-called death curse emerged from the jungles of Chult. As it was explained to me, a device known as the Soulmonger entrapped the souls of all who died and drained the life from every individual who had ever been resurrected (myself included). Unbelievably, Faerûn's most notable heroes and affluent nobles ran! Those who didn't flee to another plane of existence fell victim to the curse.

With no one to save it, the world started to splinter. All of Icewind Dale froze solid, claimed by Auril the Frostmaiden. We lost the cities of Baldur's Gate and Elturel as they were dragged into the Nine Hells, leaving immense spherical chasms in their wake. The social order of the giants crumbled, and they remade their own civilizations at the expense of ours.

The surface cities soon received reports that things weren't faring much better underground. In the realm of the Underdark, some meddling drow apparently summoned not one, but all the demon lords of the Abyss into our realm. Efforts were made to contain the demons, but as all of Dessarin Valley was afflicted by what can be best summarized as pure elemental evil, the Sword Coast's forces for good were stretched thin.

One of the last nails in the Sword Coast's proverbial coffin was when, in an act of desperation, people turned to the Cult of the Dragon for answers. It didn't take an arcane alchemist to realize that answer had five heads and went by the name of Tiamat, the Queen of Chaos and Dragons. The ritual was successful—and as Tiamat took her first flight into the skies of the Sword Coast, she rained down untold devastation. Behind Tiamat, her gathered brood blocked out the sky under tooth, wing, and claw. Cities crumbled and countless lives were lost. It felt as if the world couldn't be darker. And yet...

Hidden from all our sight, the Soulmonger had been claiming souls, feasting on the anguish of mortals. From the jungles of Chult, that horrible artifact was emptied, and Vecna—the Whispered One, the Archlich, the Undying King who wrote his own tale into the Book of Vile Darkness—was reborn. By then it was all too late, and the Soulmonger's curse and its keeper, Acererak, handed Vecna the Sword Coast on a platter. (Perhaps I should rephrase "handed," given that we scholars all know his left hand was long ago severed and mummified.) Some say he orchestrated everything, though I'd personally prefer to not give him so much credit. Regardless, countless fell to Vecna's hand, and those who remained willingly joined him, including the shrewd Zhentarim and dozens of liches. In a twist of irony, the only things preventing Vecna from extending his dominion over the entire world are other forces of evil who want it for themselves.

It's now the year 1500. The turn of the century would usually be cause for celebration, but not even I with my ever-burning optimism find much joy in it. So there you have it, a "brief" summary of events. May these be eternally engraved so that if the world is ever saved, we're never allowed to repeat our mistakes. This is the darkest the Sword Coast has ever been, and it's wholly doomed, but perhaps, just maybe... things can change for the better.

- Volo

MAP OF THE DOOMED SWORD COAST



NORTHWESTERN MAP





SOUTHWESTERN MAP



SOUTHEASTERN MAP



CHAPTER 2

FACTIONS

INDIVIDUALISTS RARELY SURVIVE APOCALYPSES. BUT IN JOINING A FACTION, YOU BUY SAFETY AT THE COST OF LIBERTY, CLIMBING THE RANKS AS YOUR RENOWN AND POWERS GROW. A TYRANT MIGHT TAKE YOU UNDER THEIR WING OR EXPEND YOU LIKE A DRAGONCHESS PIECE (AND DUPLICITOUS LEADERS MIGHT DO BOTH AT THE SAME TIME). JOINING A FACTION MEANS DEALING WITH A DEVIL YOU KNOW INSTEAD OF A WORLD FULL OF DEVILS YOU DON'T.



HIS CHAPTER OUTLINES THE SIX MOST powerful factions of the Sword Coast, including their leaders, how they rose to power, and what a player character can expect if they choose to join. Each

faction comes with burdens, but at least you get to live in this doomed world just a little longer.

Good organizations—the Emerald Enclave, the Harpers, the Lords' Alliance, and the Order of the Gauntlet—were crushed to dust between the undead god of secrets and the Queen of Evil Dragons. Those factions once maintained peace, justice, and natural harmony across the Forgotten Realms, but now they are no more. After unceasing slaughter, rogues reluctantly joined evil factions, warriors hid in long-forgotten strongholds, and mages conjured demiplanes of their own creation to live out their last days in relative peace.

Rising up to replace them are the power brokers of this doomed land. Each is dedicated to their own selfish agendas, and some even move in secret against Vecna. “Goodness” is a relative term these days, and even positive changes ooze with moral ambiguity. Even the best-hearted of adventurers are tempted to decide in exhaustion that one of these compromised new factions is “good enough.”

MANAGING FACTIONS

For most campaigns set within the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS**, each faction simply serves as a group of enemies for the adventuring party to clash against. However, a character's background may tie them to a particular faction, providing potential story arcs or an ongoing threat for a campaign. Characters embedded within a particular faction should start with 2 (1d4) renown.

As DM, it's ultimately up to you how big of a role these factions play, and whether they're isolated within separate domains or in open war with one another. For more details on handling factions and renown, see chapter 1 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

BREGAN D'AERTHE

Bregan D'aerthe is the faction without a home, a drow-led mercantile guild that roams the seas of the Forgotten Realms, occasionally making landfall when the Sword Coast is clear. Here, the drow who wished to escape the matriarchy of the Underdark maintain their culture of rebellion today.

Now that the demon lords took the Underdark, Bregan D'aerthe is arguably the only haven left for drow, though they've abandoned life underground for one on the seas instead. Ever pragmatists, the mercenary company relaxed their rules to strengthen their numbers, welcoming folks of every race and gender. The considerable size of their fleet and speed with which they move has kept them out of the direct eyeline of both Vecna and Tiamat (which ranges from one to eleven eyeballs).

The faction has numerous settlements scattered among lost islands of the Trackless Sea; however, none are considered home and simply provide shipments of food or a safe place to dock. Members of Bregan D'aerthe who live on the mainland typically serve as spies, living unassuming lives in the few remaining cities while gathering intelligence for the fleet. To some, Bregan D'aerthe is simply the latest iteration of a piracy scourge on the sea, whereas for others, they're the world's last hope.

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

- ☠ Ensure Vecna's downfall, returning the Forgotten Realms back to its former glory—with Bregan D'aerthe now a major player.
- ☠ Establish spies throughout the Forgotten Realms.
- ☠ Claim the seas, letting allies use it—for the right price.

LEADER: JARLAXLE BAENRE

Once the secret leader of Luskan, Jarlaxle Baenre was forced to uproot years of careful plans when the demon lords took the Underdark. The slender drow sports vibrant clothes, a fashionable eyepatch (which protects his mind from bothersome intrusions), and wide-brimmed hat. Underneath his clothing lies an assortment of magical items, including rings to discern lies and teleport him, bracers that conjure daggers, and a classic *cloak of invisibility*.

Jarlaxle guides Bregan D'aerthe's fleet of ships across the Trackless Sea, organizing when and where to dock. His rule is ironclad, and circumstances force him to be far harsher than he'd like. Ultimately, he puts himself above all else—if push came to shove, he'd sooner allow the entire fleet to sink.

Jarlaxle now spends most of his time brooding and scheming aboard his Lantanese submarine, the *Scarlet Marpenoth*. This clever vessel leads Bregan D'aerthe's fleet of ships from underneath the waves. Jarlaxle still regularly returns to cities across the Sword Coast, disguising himself and making fools of his enemies. Even if the world's falling apart, a man can still have his hobbies.

JOINING THE FACTION

Bregan D'aerthe is an opportunistic recruiter. When the pirates overcome a challenging sea skirmish, they sometimes offer the captured crew a chance to join. Beyond the benefits of membership, it's usually preferable to being sunk. Open recruiting attracts too much attention, but if Jarlaxle hears about remarkable characters, the flamboyant drow might approach them personally (albeit in one of his many disguises).

Characters who find themselves among Bregan D'aerthe's crew often seek escape from the horrors of the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS**; perhaps they're hopeful that everything can return to normal, though often, they've abandoned all hope. At the very least, if they're a capable set of hands, there is a place for them among here.



THE ILARETHS OF BREGAN D'AERTHE
ARE BOTH COMPETENT AND STYLISH

RENOWN

Long journeys at sea aren't always full of action, so they can be a tedious way to advance through the ranks of Bregan D'aerthe. The quickest promotions often come to spies and agents who brave the horrors of the Sword Coast.

Though the fleet proclaims inclusivity, the overwhelming majority of high-ranking leaders are still drow. There are exceptions, of course, but only a rare few non-drow manage to prove themselves invaluable or become personal favorites of Jarlaxle's.

RANKS OF BREGAN D'AERTHE

Rank	Responsibilities
Orbb	The lowly deckhand swabs up all the messes.
Kyorlinorbb	Once a member proves themselves trustworthy and a valuable asset, they're promoted to the rank of Kyorlinorbb. Their duties include training and overseeing the Orbbs.
Khal'abbil	These specialists fill vital ship roles like quartermaster, first mate, pilot, and navigator.
Mallasargtlin	These lieutenants command their own ships (or cells of agents if they're on land). Mallasargtlin are voices of reason and trust, but none dare publicly question Jarlaxle.
Ilareth	The rank of Ilareth is reserved for Jarlaxle's most trusted advisors, elite warriors, and specialists. They voyage far and wide, carrying out Jarlaxle's commands.

BENEFITS

Bregan D'aerthe support comes in these ways:

- Free travel across the waters of the Forgotten Realms.
- Frequent intelligence reports from spies in any faction, along with assistance in quietly disposing of "challenging" individuals.
- Access to a black market of magic items the pirates seize.

I am somewhat befuddled that Jarlaxle, in all his opportunistic swagger, ended up being a beacon of hope. I suppose I shouldn't be too surprised, as he plays the hero quite well.

- Volo



CULT OF THE DRAGON

The Cult of the Dragon, as its name might suggest, seeks to venerate and ultimately serve dragons. Dragon cultists brought about Tiamat's return to the Forgotten Realms, ushering in what they thought would be a golden era under draconic rule—that is, until Vecna emerged. Even so, the dragons seized much territory, making them a formidable force in the land as they seek to satiate their Queen's endless avarice.

The cult's lowest ranks are full of groveling kobolds and fanatics who believe chromatic dragons exist to be served, their innate power making them worthy of worship. Still, if a single dragon gets too greedy, they risk attracting the ire of Tiamat and guaranteeing a painful demise.

Ultimately, the Cult of the Dragon exists only as long as its dragon overlords wish for it to. The cultists view themselves as irreplaceable, the eyes and hands of all dragons—but other factions see them as parasites that latched onto the dragons to avoid being crushed. Luckily for the cult, dragons have a grandiose sense of self and relish having hordes of humanoids that exist solely to serve them.

If only the Cult of the Dragon had idolized the metallic dragons instead of the chromatic ones... things could've been so much better with Bahamut in this world.

- Volo

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

- ☠ Ensure Tiamat's ultimate reign over the Forgotten Realms.
- ☠ Serve all dragonkind, contribute to their hoards of treasure, and gain their alliance.
- ☠ Decimate the giants, from hill to storm.

LEADER: TIAMAT

Who better and more deserving to rule the Cult of the Dragon than the Dragon Queen herself? Tiamat, a goddess of the chromatic dragons, is a colossal being with five heads that speak in unison. Tiamat embodies the worst traits of dragonkind; she is arrogant, greedy, hateful, spiteful, and vain to no end. She rules the Cult of the Dragon through fear, ensuring it remains subservient to all evil dragons.

In the *Tyranny of Dragons* adventure path, Tiamat's cultists and the Red Wizards of Thay joined at the Well of Dragons to free the Dragon Queen from her prison in Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells. She brought with her enough dragons to blacken the skies under their wings. Unfortunately for Tiamat, her return to the Forgotten Realms coincided with Vecna's ascension to godhood.

Neither Tiamat nor Vecna would admit there is a chance either could lose a direct confrontation, but they both know it. That's why they've made a delicate truce. The occasional slain dragon or ransacked settlement can be overlooked for now as they each focus on lesser rivals. But despite all the treasure in her hoard, the one artifact Tiamat covets most is Vecna's skull, severed and inanimate.

JOINING THE FACTION

All humanoids are welcome to join the Cult of the Dragon, because to chromatic dragons, all humanoids are equally worthless. For some, choosing to serve a tyrannical wyrm is better than no choice at all. With so many new devotees, the dragons have streamlined initiation: raise a treasure aloft to a dragon and ask if it may be included in the dragon's hoard. If the dragon accepts the gift, it accepts the gift-giver. If not, the dragon destroys the offering in a single breath... and the person holding it, too.

REOWN

The Cult of the Dragon rewards unwavering commitment and enthusiastic public displays of faith in dragons. Those with untamed aspirations who earn the support (willing or otherwise) of a dragon can find themselves soaring through the ranks. But one mistake and they come crashing back to the ground just as quickly.

The highest echelons of the cult are shockingly political, and Wearers of Purple secure “donations” in their pursuit of ever-more-powerful dragons to serve. There are only five Wyrmspeakers—one for each of Tiamat's different-colored heads—and if a role is ever vacated, many become food for wyrms trying to secure a coveted Wyrmspeaker's mask.

Since characters who align themselves with the Cult of the Dragon choose to affiliate with dragons, it's a natural choice for draconic bloodline sorcerers, dragonborn, and the like. Adventurers who see the inevitability of war between Tiamat and Vecna might also wish to hedge their bets by siding with the Queen of Evil Dragons.

I've thankfully never been in the presence of Tiamat, although now that I am deceased... perhaps I should take the opportunity.

- Volo

RANKS OF THE CULT OF THE DRAGON

Rank	Responsibilities
Dragonclaw	A Dragonclaw is the backbone of the Cult of the Dragon. Some oversee the kobolds, while others may be assigned to serve a particular dragon.
Dragonwing	Ascending to Dragonwing brings a new perspective on life, one in which the skies open up. The wings gifted by the dragons give cultists the first true taste of what it means to follow the path of the dragon, and for many, the taste of flight is dangerously addictive.
Dragonfang	Dragonfangs supervise initiates, lead battles, and negotiate with other Dragonfangs on behalf of their respective dragons. Wyrmspeakers keep a close eye on this rank, as many Dragonfangs begin to feel caught in a pyramid scheme and burn out (occasionally under dragonfire).
Dragonsoul	Rising to the rank of Dragonsoul is evidence that you now actively embody the powerful (albeit evil) traits of a dragon, leaving much of your mortal identity behind. This rank is bestowed on trusted captains and confidants of the Wearers of Purple.
Wearer of Purple	Dragons assign a Wearer of Purple to administrate the countless forts, cities, and settlements claimed by the Cult of the Dragon. Most who rise to this rank are politicians, nobles, or decorated veterans, with a close association to one specific powerful dragon.
Wyrmspeaker	Atop the Cult of the Dragon sit five Wyrmspeakers, one for each color of chromatic dragon. The Wyrmspeakers report to Tiamat directly, and their sole task is to seek out the dragons of the Forgotten Realms and ensure their ongoing allegiance to the Dragon Queen.

BENEFITS

Cult of the Dragon support comes in these ways:

- 👁️ Dragons command the skies, and even a simple flyover is enough to lend authority to a cultist's threat. In addition, few modes of transport are as expedient as dragon-flight.
- 👁️ Followers of the Cult of the Dragon can make requests or pleas to their draconic overlords. If the dragon is feeling generous, they may even carry out the request.
- 👁️ If ever overwhelmed, fellow cultists may come to the character's aid in the form of 1d4 Dragonclaws, led by a Dragonfang. Alternatively, if the character has a particularly high standing, a lone adult dragon arrives instead—though the latter often demands compensation after the dust settles.



OGREMOCH AND HIS
SIBLINGS NOW ROAM
THE MATERIAL PLANE

CULT OF THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE

The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye is an insidious one, for those who join it don't realize its evils until it's too late. Prospective cultists come because they feel a connection to nature or the four elements, and the cults tap deeply into their emotions. But the cults of Eternal Flame, Black Earth, and Crushing Wave, and Howling Hatred united against all that opposed them and summoned four Princes of Elemental Evil into the Material Plane.

Imix the All-Consuming Fire, Ogremoch the Mountain of Doom, Yan-C-Bin the Storm Born, and Olhydra the Well of Endless Anguish were brought forth into the Dessarin Valley, but they didn't succumb to their base instincts and fight one another as they usually do. Instead, these Princes of Elemental

Evil revealed their plan to their followers: to free Tharizdun, the Elder Elemental Eye imprisoned in some forgotten abyssal plane.

Vecna immediately struck a deal, and the princes had no idea how one-sided it was: he'd summon forth their deity, Tharizdun the Chained, if they would terraform the Forgotten Realms as Vecna pleased. Vecna kept his word to the letter—he brought Tharizdun to the Forgotten Realms, but ironically left him in chains in Vecna's own sanctum. The princes wait for Tharizdun's rare moments of lucidity in which he can deliver guidance, but elementals aren't known for their patience.

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

- ☠ Shape the Forgotten Realms to their whims, or if they can't, ultimately destroy it.
- ☠ Free Tharizdun from Vecna's chains.

LEADER: THARIZDUN THE CHAINED

The corrupted deity Tharizdun weaves plots from Voidharrow, his malevolent multiversal prison—condemned here as eternal punishment for bringing the Abyss into existence. In brief moments, the unyielding chaos of his prison relents, allowing Tharizdun's deceptive genius to shine through to the Forgotten Realms. In one such instance, he devised the persona of the Elder Elemental Eye.

Through deception and trickery, the Elder Elemental Eye gained the allegiance of four Princes of Elemental Evil—Imix, Ogmoch, Yan-C-Bin, and Olhydra—who believe they are creations of the chained god. In turn, these princes vowed to see Tharizdun freed from his prison, but these plans were countered by Vecna, who now holds Tharizdun as a prisoner secluded within the halls of Silverymoon.

Despite his imprisonment, Tharizdun is still a deity who—when not overwhelmed by the corruption of years within Voidharrow—can relay his power-hungry commands to the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye. Few know that Tharizdun's true intentions match that of the demons: utter destruction of all that exists. He did create the Abyss, after all.

JOINING THE FACTION

Those with a natural elemental affinity are welcomed with open arms into the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye. As the cult is a coalition of other elemental cults, it benefits from varying ideologies where all are valued—assassins, spies, cavalry, demolitionists, and warriors alike. However, the faction is still split into elemental cores of earth, wind, fire and water, and a member can only join one.

The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye dares not openly oppose the Archlich himself for fear of harm coming to Tharizdun, but it moves in secret to recruit Vecna's enemies. In fact, only the upper ranks of the cult are even aware Tharizdun exists... and even they still believe his grand deception.

Tough choice: do I choose the cultists who praise the five-headed dragon or the cultists who want to bring about elemental destruction?

- Volo

RENOWN

The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye is the purest meritocracy of any of the factions in the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS**. While it's possible for those without elemental prowess to climb the ranks, they find a "crystal ceiling" at the rank of Essence.

Each element in the coalition favors a certain set of skills. For example, earth cultists revere strong minds and unyielding resolve, whereas wind cultists look for the most opportunistic and perceptive members. Fire cultists seek raw elemental firepower, and water cultists pride themselves on being pragmatic and deliberate. Regardless of which elemental sect a member joins, they proceed through the ranks as follows.

RANKS OF THE CULT OF THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE

Rank	Responsibilities
Mote	Motes are mere initiates, those who have proved themselves worthy of joining but have little skill in bending the elements to their whims.
Primal	Most of the cult's soldiers are Primals in possession of raw, unrefined, but nevertheless potent elemental skill.
Essence	Members that attain the rank of Essence stand in more commanding positions, either overseeing a small squad of Primals or taking charge of elemental training.
Eternal	Eternals are the Elemental Prophet's trusted enforcers, serving within their sect to carry out their personal inquiries and objectives.
Senior Eye	Senior Eyes receive visions or messages from Tharizdun directly, and as such are permitted to speak and answer to any of the Princes of Elemental Evil.
Elemental Prophet	There are only ever four Elemental Prophets at any one time—one for each Prince of Elemental Evil. Rewarded for ushering the princes' return, they know of Tharizdun's imprisonment, dutifully shepherding the flock of cultists to free him.

Characters who choose to join the Cult of the Elemental Eye tend to be naturally destructive through whatever means they have. Maybe they see a broken world that must be completely leveled before it can be rebuilt, or they believe the true path to overthrowing Vecna is one of stone, water, fire and wind.

BENEFITS

The cult provides support in these ways:

- 🧠 The earth cultists can provide reliable mounts and secret tunnels to core locations.
- 🧠 The water cultists can expedite travel by sea and evade the Bregan D'aerthe.
- 🧠 The flame cultists can unleash devastation in assault missions.
- 🧠 The air cultists provide intelligence and assist in stealth excursions.

VECNA'S ALLIANCE

Vecna's Alliance comprises all the forces who have bent the knee to Vecna, whether out of obligation, fear, or a combination of the two. There is no council, no meeting to be held; they all simply wait at the beck and call of Vecna's divine commands. Vecna's Alliance is nothing more than a dictatorship in which all members are united by their fear of Vecna.

Most members had little choice, only rallying behind his banner because they would sooner join the Archlich than fall to his power. An ambitious few, however, saw the turning tides and joined willingly, seizing the promises of power and overthrowing their enemies with Vecna's aid. No other faction can match the sheer numbers of Vecna's Alliance. Notable members include (but aren't limited to):

Acererak of Chult. In forging the *Soulmonger* and using it to bring about the birth of Vecna and the coming era of darkness, Acererak proved to be Vecna's most loyal servant. In exchange, Acererak's powers vastly increased and all of Chult became his personal domain.



Never before has all of Faerûn faced something as repugnant, vile, and maleficent as Vecna. I pray to whatever gods may hear us: let us defeat him.

- Volo

Arcane Brotherhood. From the comfort of their Host Tower of the Arcane in Luskan, the Arcane Brotherhood joined Vecna's Alliance almost immediately. Between the faction's collection of Netherese artifacts and its obsession with chasing forbidden knowledge, the Arcane Brotherhood's goals align with Vecna's own ambitions almost too perfectly.

Liches of Warlock's Crypt. Vecna gave the simplest of proposals to this undead city's lich ruler, Larloch: join or be destroyed. Larloch found that little changed by joining the alliance: Vecna levitated the Warlock's Crypt into the sky to better keep watch on it, but the outside world still leaves them alone.

The Twisted Rune. In the shadows of Calimshan lurk a cabal of liches known as the Twisted Rune. Vecna quickly uncovered how they pull the strings of the ruling families of that land to guide its development. Vecna saw fit to allow them to rule the cultured land of Calimshan—provided they worshiped him to his liking.

Orc Kingdom of Many-Arrows. Vecna's plans for the dwarfholds didn't include the dwarves. The orcs merely needed a nudge in the right direction, and with a bit of support from Vecna, they ransacked the dwarven strongholds in a matter of tendays. In exchange, the kingdom swore unwavering loyalty to Vecna.

Yuan-ti. The snake-people of Najara fell into line when Vecna promised to revive the yuan-ti god Sseth—a promise that was nothing more than deception. Still, the yuan-ti benefit from more freedom than most.

Red Wizards of Thay. The lich Szass Tam's power paled in comparison to Vecna's. Rather than watch tireless years of work crumble in seconds, the Red Wizards vowed allegiance to Vecna. The Red Wizards continue their machinations, though they are occasionally summoned to conjure up teleportation circles or unbreakable arcane defenses.

Ultimately, Vecna's Alliance is at his mercy. Vecna is early in his reign and still finds sadistic pleasure in toying with his servants. But should the Maker of All That Is Secret decide the Alliance has outlived its purpose, he'll bring it to a swift and brutal end.

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

- ☠ Maintain an unquestioned rule over the Forgotten Realms.
- ☠ Expand control to all the multiverse.
- ☠ Squash all hopes of rebellion and destroy any remaining bastions of faith.

LEADER: VECNA

What can be said about Vecna that hasn't already been whispered in the darkest halls or screamed from the tallest peaks? This infamous figure holds countless titles: the Archlich, the Whispered One, the Undying King, the Chain God. Even the darkest tales of Vecna's unparalleled evil barely scratch the surface of this arrogant and egotistical lich of untold power.

For all Vecna's flaws, none can match his calculating mind and ability to pry secrets from the unwilling. To Vecna, a secret is a hidden blade, granting the ability to bring about anyone's downfall—demons, devils, dragons, and giants alike.

Adorned in regal ever-flowing robes, Vecna uses all manner of illusions to appear to others as he imagines himself in his own mind: a deity worthy of worship from the entire world. Lavish rings, bracelets, and jewelry cover his body, and his matching crown adorned with ruby skulls befits the God-King that he has become. His missing left hand and left eye have been replaced with spectral replicas, which thrum with sickly green magic.

Vecna hasn't grown complacent in his new reign. He believes the Forgotten Realms are his to shape in his image, aside from a few irksome distractions that he'll deal with in due time. Many wrongly believe he wishes to annihilate all life in the Forgotten Realms, but Vecna's ego depends on the idolization and fear mortal creatures provide. Without lives, whose tortuous secrets would Vecna keep?

JOINING THE FACTION

Vecna doesn't value strong minions, as all pale in comparison to his power. However, those who willingly accept Vecna's torments and offer up the darkest secrets of their being are permitted to join the alliance. In truth, because of Vecna's belief in his "unquestioned" rule, the God-King assumes all mortals are members of his alliance; any who openly refuse are simply waiting to die.

The quickest way to join Vecna's Alliance is to accept him as an Undying patron (found in *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*), walking the path of a warlock and binding your soul with him. Wizards resourceful enough to be invited to Vecna's School of Secrets (found in chapter 5 of this gazetteer) find themselves carrying out the God-King's wishes as mandatory assignments. The cost is dear, but wielding a mere fraction of Vecna's power is said to be a sensation unlike any other. Vecna freely grants the secrets of life and death to those who vow to use each and every life they live in his service.

RENOWN

Characters who willingly choose to join Vecna's Alliance are rotten to the core. They put their own lives above all others, and in a desperate grasp for power, align themselves with the embodiment of evil. Earning a promotion is difficult and often requires bringing the Whispered One earth-shaking, long-forgotten secrets and lore. Vecna finds secrets delicious and collects the skulls of giants, dragons, and traitors, so spies and assassins climb his ranks the fastest.

Vecna prevents the Forgotten Realms from ever finding peace, and to join him is to abandon all hope and choke out the last breath of hope in others.

THE RANKS OF VECNA'S ALLIANCE

Rank	Responsibilities
Spawn	The insignificant mortals of the Forgotten Realm make up the ranks of Vecna's Spawn. With little agency, they are expected to sacrifice their lives at the drop of a copper piece—and some even view this as the greatest of honors.
Tooth, Finger, and Blood	Teeth, Fingers, and Blood of Vecna are specialists who truly believe Vecna is the only authority over life and death. The Teeth of Vecna are arcane spellcasters who toil away on necromantic projects and reinforce his undead armies. The Fingers of Vecna are wealthy nobles and scholars who put themselves in many proverbial pies, rooting out secrets. Lastly, the Blood of Vecna takes up arms against his enemies, either serving a Hand or commanding lesser Spawn.
Hand	As the name might suggest, the Hands are trusted individuals who carry out Vecna's will across the Forgotten Realms. They must be as cold and ruthless as the Archlich.
Eye	The Eyes of Vecna become the Whispered One's confidants, and they scour the lands in search of secrets to deliver to their master. These truly vile souls share Vecna's every ideal.
Voice	The rare Voices are empowered to make binding promises on behalf of the evil god of secrets. He exerts the most control over his most powerful followers because he's never forgotten the betrayal of his trusted lieutenant, Kas.

BENEFITS

Vecna's Alliance support comes in these ways:

- ☠ If you die serving Vecna, you'll likely get a second chance as a loyal undead.
- ☠ You gain access to long-forgotten, ancient secrets of arcane power.
- ☠ Vecna sends a nothic to travel with you (but of course, he can spy on you through the creature's giant eye).

ZARIEL'S LEGION

Zariel's Legion is a militaristic force with the singular goal of preventing the demons from winning the Blood War. Most of the faction consists of devils in their many shapes, from imps to pit fiends, led by Zariel, the angel who fell from Mount Celestia to become an archdevil in Avernus. When the Underdark was claimed by the demon hordes, the Blood War became a war on two fronts: Avernus and the Material Plane.

Zariel vacated her role as Archduke, taking her entire basalt citadel to hover over the crater where Baldur's Gate once stood. The crater's depths peeled back the first layers of the Underdark, making it yet another front line akin to the River Styx, a multi-planar river that connects the Abyss to the Nine Hells. In turn, Zariel's rival Bel reclaimed the title of Archduke, much to his delight, while maintaining the ongoing stalemate between devils and demons in Avernus. Now Zariel's Legion receives reinforcements from the Nine Hells, perpetually clashing wherever the demons may emerge.

I can't say I've ever been a fan of devils, but you have to be impressed with their dedication to slaying demons. It'd be almost noble, if it weren't being done in their own self-interest.

- Volo

Vecna and Zariel have never spoken about their apparent truce, but as long as Zariel's Legion remains singularly focused on the Blood War, Vecna doesn't interfere. Gutting the dwarfholds and filling them with his loyal orcs as he did, he's certain he could defend against demonkind on his own. Conversely, Zariel's Legion occasionally provides assistance to the Cult of the Dragon, though the factions have a complicated relationship. Originally, Zariel aided in freeing Tiamat from Avernus, mostly for her own selfish reasons, and now they happen to share the same plane of existence yet again. For as long as they keep clear of one another, the hatchet can remain buried.

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

- 👹 Prevent the demonic horde from consuming the multiverse.
- 👹 Monitor both Vecna and Tiamat's activities and report to Asmodeus.
- 👹 Gather more souls to further populate their legion of fiends.

LEADER: ZARIEL

Once the Archduke of Avernus, the fallen angel Zariel has always believed the cosmic burden of the Blood War is hers to bear. If the devils didn't form the line of defense against the unending swarms of demons, the entire multiverse would be consumed or fall into utter chaos. Zariel understands the weight upon her winged shoulders, turning all the ire and malice in her body against the demons.

Physically, few are as imposing as the angel of the devils, complete with burning halo and scorched bat-like wings. Some forgotten heroes died trying to redeem her by presenting her with the *Sword of Zariel*, which she instead destroyed and reforged into the Sword of Avernus. Since she only has one hand, the other has been replaced with a flail forged from the shattered head of the demonic mace *Matalotok*.

Ultimately, Zariel is a warmonger, overcome by her perceived obligation to endlessly battle with the demons. She's consumed with fury and ruthless justice, scorning those who lack the skills to slay swaths of demons. Zariel demands utter obedience from all under her command, and questioning her is met with the harshest judgment she can deliver.

JOINING THE FACTION

The easiest way to join Zariel's Legion is to first be a downright rotten individual, promptly die, then as your soul is condemned to the torments of the Nine Hells, be "lucky" enough to be returned to the Material Plane as a lemure. At Helldoor's Gate, you'll have the pleasure of dying repeatedly at the hands of demons, and as you prove your worth, you can gradually climb the chain of command, defining yourself by the demons you slay and devils you lead.

Rarely, living souls choose to freely join Zariel's Legion, as they believe keeping the demons contained within the Underdark is the only thing stopping Faerûn from falling entirely into chaos. Some consider it a holy honor, a selfless act that rarely exists in these lands. The world is far from a delight while under Vecna's reign, but when compared to the demon princes, many consider him the lesser evil.

Joining Zariel's Legion comes with a cost, however; if you haven't already died, you must first sign a contract that forfeits your soul. In exchange, when your inevitable death arrives, you carry your rank with you to your new fiendish form in the Nine Hells. After this, you return to the warfront invigorated and stronger than before, ready to repeat the cycle of death ad infinitum, for there is no end to the Blood War.

RENOWN

As a faction solely dedicated to war, acts of heroism and victory in battle are the quickest way to become noticed in Zariel's Legion. Unfortunately, nearly every devil has aspirations of climbing the ranks, and they'll jump at any opportunity to prevent your promotion—or better yet, ensure your demotion.

Though victorious warriors are held in high esteem, the war effort also requires a steady supply of resources. As such, you can gain recognition through more practical means like providing fresh souls, revealing schemes to slow the demonic onslaught, or exposing doubters within the ranks. With each successful rank, you'll take more responsibility on your shoulders, but this is merely the price of keeping the multiverse safe.

THE RANKS OF VECNA'S ALLIANCE

Rank	Responsibilities
Legionary	As the newest recruits in Zariel's Legion, Legionaries are incapable of giving orders and expected to follow them without question.
Optio	Optios typically serve as squad leaders of a lance—the Legion's smallest unit. However, Optios need not lead a band of devils to be afforded respect; they can also serve beyond the battlefield in a role such as a spy.
Signifier	Further up the chain of command, the Signifier oversees ten Optios and their lances. From the warfront, they survey the lines of assault and defense to make suitable adjustments. The violence of war ensures the rank is frequently vacated, making Signifier the highest most devils can aspire to.
Legate	Legates command an entire legion, where upwards of a thousand devils await to obey their orders without question. Most legates avoid the battlefield, leading from behind; however, only those who thrive in wading into battle are rewarded with Zariel's attention.
Dux	Zariel's trusted advisors, the Dux, provide tactical advice and shape the outcome of the Blood War. However, these responsibilities often place you in the presence of Zariel and her vengeful acts, making it a dangerous rank to hold.

Characters that choose to align themselves with Zariel's Legion are tortured souls or those who truly believe this is a holy cause worth dying for. Aside from the endless war that joining brings, there are a few perks for ascending the ranks.

BENEFITS

Zariel's Legion support comes in these ways:

- 👤 Zariel's Legion can provide and repair war machines—engines of destruction powered by soul coins.
- 👤 Cultists can assist in summoning devils who can strike bargains. Since most members have already forfeited their soul, favors are a common bargaining currency.
- 👤 Occasionally, if the adventurers are overwhelmed, an Optio leading a lance of 6 (1d10) spined devils or bearded devils may come to their rescue.

If given a choice between their soul being fed to Vecna or sold to a devil, most folks would prefer the latter.

- Volo

ZHENTARIM

The Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network, once skulked in the shadows, dealing in illicit wares and morally questionable mercenaries. Now that Vecna casts a shadow over the whole world, they begrudgingly step into stark daylight. The Zhentarim's militia upholds Vecna's laws in every major city, squashing any flickering hope of insurrection.

When Vecna and Tiamat arrived in the Forgotten Realms, the Black Network's leader Manshoon made a shrewd choice: he appealed to the Archlich's logical side and preserved the Zhentarim. Outwardly, this force is just another part of Vecna's Alliance. But secretly, Manshoon wants more.

The Zhentarim still never turns down a chance to make coin. Their assassins target members of the other factions, and elite soldiers train in special tactics designed to counter dragons. They say dead kings are buried with all their wealth, and no one has seen the inside of the tomb Vecna rose from. Perhaps in there Manshoon might also find a convenient solution to this Vecna "problem."

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

- 💀 Amass wealth and influence throughout the Forgotten Realms.
- 💀 Seize power through any means.
- 💀 Wait for the perfect moment to betray Vecna and take control of Faerûn.

LEADERS:

MANSHOON AND THE PEREGHOST

The two rival leaders of the Zhentarim—Manshoon and the Pereghost—set aside ideological differences for survival's sake. As a benefit, if either one of their schemes to betray Vecna were exposed, the other leader has plausible deniability. They operate from two key locations, Waterdeep and Zhentil Keep.

MANSHOON

The original founder of the Zhentarim is as magically skilled as he is ruthless. But the Manshoon ruling today is no longer the original. Manshoon exists as a never-ending series of clones, extending his lifespan and utility infinitely. He rules the Zhentarim forces stationed in Waterdeep, where he still calls the Kolat Towers his home.

In some twisted way Manshoon did truly achieve his goal of ruling Waterdeep as a Wizard-King. He'll never speak of it, but this irks him to no end that everyone sees him as Vecna's second-in-command. Manshoon imagines topping Vecna in an avalanche of dead clones, no matter how many times he must die to do it.

THE PEREGHOST

If Manshoon is the mind of the Zhentarim, the Pereghost is undoubtedly the might. A fierce divine commander, the Pereghost is a daunting, skull-faced warrior who rides atop a dark steed with a magical winged harness. He inspires the Zhentarim through strength, fear, and perhaps even respect. He forges every trainee who steps through the halls of Zhentil Keep into a fine warrior.

Where Manshoon seeks to scheme or bribe, the Pereghost focuses on merit, shaping the Zhentil Keep army into a formidable force. In addition, the Pereghost understands a dark secret of the world: though Vecna gloats that he has severed the connection to all other deities, the Pereghost still maintains a connection to Cyric, the Prince of Lies. What better lie exists than convincing the whole world that their gods have abandoned them? The Pereghost hates Vecna for trying to deprive him of his god, but Cyric finds the whole ordeal to be a delightfully dark comedy.

*The Zhentarim remain a group of
inscrutable thugs and ne'er-do-wells.
They're opportunistic traitors who
turned their backs on the entire
Sword Coast.*

- Volo

JOINING THE FACTION

Within each Vecna-ruled city, the Zhentarim operate recruitment centers—or when dire need strikes, they conscript unwilling citizens instead. Recruits who show potential are sent to Zhentil Keep to be honed into the ideal soldier, while less promising recruits are assigned to patrolling, tax collection, or banal guard duties.

A frightening number of citizens trade their freedoms for the security the Zhentarim provides in today's lawless world. Refugees come to Zhentil Keep to flee the Tiamat's cultists or the Red Wizards of Thay, but the Zhentarim aren't much kinder than any other powers-that-be.

RENOWN

Killers, cheaters, and usurers go far in the Zhentarim—as long as they don't target those under the Black Network's protection. They recruit more soldiers than merchants today, but one perverse good has emerged in this world: fewer random attacks on shopkeepers, because only the ruthless and well-connected ones survived.



AGENTS OF THE BLACK NETWORK
ARE ALWAYS COURTEOUS TO YOUR FACE
(BUT NOT ALWAYS BEHIND YOUR BACK)

RANKS OF THE ZHENTARIM

Rank	Responsibilities
Fang	The entry-level Fangs make up the bulk of the Zhentarim's forces. Unscrupulous and amoral, these recruits will do anything to keep the "peace."
Wolf	Wolves are captains who delegate to the Fangs across the territories they oversee.
Viper	The Zhentarim values these specialists for their skills in assassinating political targets, squashing rebellions, or brokering secret information.
Ardragon	Any Fang can bully a citizen on the street. It takes real craft to intimidate generals, politicians, and kings. That's what an Ardragon brings to the Black Network.
Dreadlord	Dreadlords are the true inner circle of the Zhentarim, commanding officers second only to Manshoon and the Pereghost.

Characters who choose to join the Zhentarim know better than to bother with morality, especially in this amoral world. If you love gold and never ask questions about where it came from, you're a perfect fit for the Zhentarim.

BENEFITS

Zhentarim support comes in these ways:

- 🦴 The Zhentarim plant high-ranking officials in every Vecna-ruled city, allowing meetings with important figures to be swiftly arranged.
- 🦴 Zhentarim agents have access to the finest equipment at discounted prices, as the Black Network controls most markets.
- 🦴 Within Zhentil Keep, the Zhentarim have access to training in nearly any field, whether in the martial, magical, or clandestine arts.

*Dead are the days of the
Sword Coast's golden era.
Even its skies are lost to the
encroaching darkness of ash,
blood, and dragons.*

- Volo

CHAPTER 3

LOCATIONS

THE SWORD COAST ISN'T A WELCOMING PLACE—THE CUSTOMS OF OLD ARE DEAD, HONOR IS ABANDONED, AND EVIL REIGNS SUPREME.



HIS CHAPTER DETAILS THE MANY WARPED and twisted locales of the Doomed Sword Coast and surrounding areas. It provides an overview of each city's operation, the types of individuals

who reside inside, and ultimately, how harshly they respond to adventurers' meddling.

In addition, most locations provide adventure hooks, listed by recommended adventuring party level: low level (1–4), mid level (5–10), high level (11–16), and epic level (17–20). You're welcome to adjust the difficulty of any of these adventure hooks to fit your campaign.

From floating castles to insidious depths, the locations in this chapter are only the tip of the adventuring iceberg. These details merely set the stage—albeit a stage that's shoddily built, painfully splintered, and rapidly catching fire. The adventurers drive the action, and in the world's darkest hour, where will their adventures take them? Only time will tell.

THE SWORD COAST, BUT NOT AS YOU KNOW IT

From the Sword Coast's once-lush misty forests to unforgiving blustery mountains, this diverse land of rich history is now utterly war-scorched. Here, the fate of all Faerûn has been shaped and sealed time and again—and its unfortunate survivors have witnessed firsthand how the Sword Coast has been warped by countless agents of evil.

It can be heartbreaking to remember how the world used to be, in light of what it has become—the terraformed land the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye has twisted in their evil elemental image, the cities incinerated during Tiamat's return. However, no amount of denial can change that this is the Sword Coast now, and unless someone does something, this is how it shall remain forevermore.

DARKNESS CORRUPTS

Countless cataclysms have reduced many cities to dust or dragged them into the depths of the Nine Hells. Even those that survived bear little resemblance to their past glory. In a world in which evil reigns supreme, those who failed to adapt were crushed under its wake or forced into the darkest of shadows. The great cities that once upheld justice and championed good have quickly fallen into corruption. Even the minor settlements, though sheltered from many horrors of day-to-day life, find themselves succumbing to the slow creep of evil latent in the world. Those who cling to memories of a better time can do nothing more than watch from the shadows, helpless as the world basks in evil deeds.

MAJOR LOCATIONS

The competing factions have carved up much of the Sword Coast, and in between, battles and conflicts rage. In each territory's heart, their cynical leader rules with iron fist and brutal resolve. Despite the litany of cities and capitals outlined in this section, there is much more to the Doomed Sword Coast than mentioned. To step into any of these locations unwitting or unprepared or lacking wits is akin to a death sentence. Caution is a harsh necessity in the Doomed Sword Coast, because any lapse is a mistake no one can afford to make twice.

EVERNIGHT

FORMERLY KNOWN AS NEVERWINTER

Population: 6,350 (38% ghouls, 22% ghastrs, 15% vampires, 20% undead, 5% other races).

Defense: Only the bravest—and most foolish—would lay siege to this city, full of countless flesh-hungry undead. As most of its population needs no sleep, Evernight is ever-vigilant against attackers of all (bite-sized) shapes. Should all else fail, they possess a doomsday artifact capable of eradicating the entire city within an instant.

Organizations: A collective of Evernight's most powerful undead govern the city, and they call themselves the Tribunal. A contingent of Red Wizards of Thay moves through Evernight frequently, seemingly protected by a diplomatic agreement, though none are sure if the wizard's stay of their own volition or as spies working for Vecna's Alliance.

Evernight always existed, here in this spot—not in the Material Plane but in the dark realm of Shadowfell, like Neverwinter's evil sister city. At the city's lowest, Neverwinter was still suffering from the 1451 volcanic eruption of Mount Hotenow combined with the heavy-handed laws of Lord Neverember. The harder the city chased its former glory, the closer to Shadowfell it became, until the Jewel of the North vanished overnight. Neverwinter was replaced by what's colloquially known as the Tomb of the North, a festering pit of ghouls and other undead. Evernight sits in a perpetual state of shifting shadow, and its image becomes warped when viewed from a distance, thanks to its link to the Plane of Shadow. Those shadows provide the perfect cover for ghouls and ghastrs alike to prowl, awaiting their next unsuspecting meal.

Despite bearing some resemblance to Neverwinter, every corner of Evernight festers in a state of intentional disrepair. Roads of grave dirt and bone dust meander between the city's rotting wooden and derelict stone buildings that cast jagged shadows. When Evernight imposed itself over Neverwinter, the transition was far from smooth. The river of lava that once carved Evernight in half forked into three, surrounding the city in a moat of molten rock. Where streams of lava meet the Sea of Swords, a mist is born, flowing from there to perpetually roam the city.

The unbeating heart of Evernight lies within the Black Mound, a district that holds the manors of powerful undead. It is here that the Tribunal gathers in the House of Screams—named in part for its heated arguments, but more notably, for the cries from its basement arena, where countless undead fight to their final death. Suffice to say, those who live

in a willing state of undeath find much to enjoy within Evernight. For the living, however, the city holds only horror—everything goes bump in Evernight.

HISTORY

The true origin of Evernight is enshrouded in such a mystery that not even Vecna knows the full extent of the tale. Within the Plane of Shadow, better known as the Shadowfell, cities or structures from the Material Plane exist as twisted echoes.

While Neverwinter was once on a path to glory, Evernight—its dismal reflection—existed in a constant state of disrepair. Within the Shadowfell, Evernight established itself as the city of undead. It served as a crossroads between planes, which greatly bolstered the city's commerce. Evernight and Neverwinter lived in an unhappy balance...until everything changed. It's said that on Neverwinter's darkest day, when endless assaults from undead and dragons failed to relent, the differences between Neverwinter and Evernight became insignificant—and so, Neverwinter simply ceased to exist.

There is some truth in that, but the shadar-kai's careful sabotage had already weakened the connection between the realms. Rumors say that the shadar-kai were working on the Raven Queen's behest, aspiring to lure Vecna from the Material Plane and settle their feud once and for all. Regardless of why it happened, the city of Evernight merged with the Material Plane and consumed what was once Neverwinter. Though Evernight has left the Shadowfell, the world it now inhabits is dark indeed—its residents will fit in just fine.

GOVERNMENT

Compared to any other cities now populated with undead, Evernight might be considered "civilized"—at least in a judicial sense. The common populace of flesh-eating undead could certainly benefit from learning some table manners. The city has few written laws, and the citizenry solves most disputes on their own.

Matters that can't be solved amicably are presented to Evernight's tribunal, a collection of the city's most wise, powerful, and ancient undead. After both sides have said their piece, the Tribunal declares who was in the right... and who should be eaten alive. Understandably, tribunals are few and far between, reserved for those who feel they have no other choice.

Living beings can seek diplomatic immunity from the Tribunal—an essential step for those who'd like to avoid being eaten by the often-famished population. The city even has a few living people in positions of moderate power (usually necromancers and wizards on the verge of lichdom).

CITIZENRY

Evernight is a haven for two kinds of citizens: those of evil alignments and those who savor the taste of warm blood and flesh. The dead rule the streets, settling disputes among themselves through words or teeth as necessary. Naturally, factions have formed among the elder ghouls, vampires, and necromancers, ensuring their members a certain level of control over fresh meals and leeway when addressing the Tribunal.

In everyday life (or unlife), the common populace of brainless flesh-eating monstrosities has little need for traditional entertainment. The more intellectual undead find enjoyment in watching macabre corpse-puppet shows, playing hide and seek with mortals as prey, and watching the lesser undead fight over scraps of meat—occasionally served while it's still living, for added drama.

ECONOMY AND TRADE

Evernight prioritizes nothing more than live meat, in whatever shape or form it might be. In the past, the connection between Evernight and Neverwinter provided the perfect avenue for abducting mortals to eat, but that link has long since been severed. As a result, the city is entering an era of austerity as food grows increasingly scarce.

Thankfully, most residents don't need to eat, but they still take sadistic enjoyment in doing so. The tribunal is too aware of the encroaching strife and has begun mobilizing packs of hunting ghouls and enacting trade deals (often using undead warriors as currency) to ensure a steady supply of meals. If this precarious balance is lost, infighting would likely overwhelm the city. A warm meal beats an undead one, but no matter how rotten the flesh, it's preferable to an empty stomach.

RELIGION

When the city resided within the despair-filled plane of the Shadowfell, it was filled with followers of Bhaal (the deity of murder), Myrkul (the deity of the dead), and most notably, Orcus (the demon lord of the undead). The latter had the Temple of Filth built in his honor—a horrific structure formed of bone and ever-changing corpses, which are swiftly replaced when the decaying bodies begin to crumble.

When Evernight was thrust out of the Shadowfell into the godless land of the Material Plane, this understandably complicated matters. Rumors carried on the wind told how Vecna had personally bested Orcus, unseating him as the lord of the undead. Collectively, Evernight has yet to renounce their faith in the demon lord, but activity around the temple has dwindled. Many former religious zealots, knowing

that agents of the Whispered One could lurk behind any corner of the shade-warped city, have wisely fallen silent until their place in the Doomed Sword Coast is cemented.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

What sections of Evernight aren't covered by derelict buildings are dedicated to a single makeshift graveyard that sprawls the length of the city. Non-undead can't expect much hospitality in the city, but those who dare enter may encounter the following.

POOL OF DAYLIGHT

Held within the deepest bowels of the Temple of Filth, the Pool of Daylight glows with unparalleled radiance. This doomsday artifact paralyzes lesser undead who merely draw near its waters, and it outright destroys undead who touch it. In the depths of the pool lies an artifact that, when activated, releases the devastating power of Toril's sun. Despite the danger it presents to Evernight, the artifact is held as a last resort, a menace that makes even Vecna hesitate to assault the city.

VEIL OF SHADOWFELL

There are numerous consequences of forcibly relocating an entire city from the Shadowfell, such as the gradually shifting demeanor of its undead residents and the magical dimming of all lights, thanks to the shadowy veil that enshrouds the city. Perhaps most notably, the city now boasts the Material Plane's largest portal to the Shadowfell, which lies at the bottom of the seemingly bottomless Demon Pit.

EVERNIGHT ADVENTURES

No one should venture into Evernight unprepared—every moment a living creature spends in the city could be the moment they become an undead creature. However, if the heroes find themselves in the city of ghouls for any reason, they can keep themselves busy with the following suggestions:

To Earn One's Keep (Low Level). A mortal who enters Evernight risks being torn apart and quickly devoured unless they have the protection of an undead patron. To this end, Lady Visamina (she/her, neutral evil elf **vampire**) is the undead equivalent of a philanthropist, seeking out the adventuring party to offer protection in exchange for delivering one or two warm-blooded meals.

Let Light Reign (Epic Level). Expert scholars of the Shadowfell stumble across rumors about the Pool of Daylight, a powerful undead-destroying artifact that's too tempting to not investigate. The adventuring party is hired (perhaps by the Harpers or Vecna) to infiltrate Evernight and step into the Temple of Filth to claim the radiant artifact from hordes of ghouls. If they can't get close to the pool, no one can.

HELLDOOR'S GATE

FORMERLY KNOWN AS BALDUR'S GATE

Population: 125,140 (83% fiends, 7% tieflings, 10% other races).

Defense: The city itself is an infernal warfront filled to the brim with regiments prepared to march against the demons below or any threat from beyond the city's walls. Bands of winged devils routinely patrol the skies, prepared to harass or capture any who wander too close.

Organizations: Helldoor's Gate is the fortress and base of operation for Zariel's Legion, focused on its singular purpose of quashing all demons.

What was once the infamous city of Baldur's Gate is now a hellscape. The rebuilt remains of the city circle the edges of an unfathomably huge crater in which the city of Baldur's Gate once sat. Easily a mile wide, the pit appears far deeper because the bottom is perpetually stained in demon ichor. In truth, Helldoor's Gate is less of a city and more of a siege line where the legions of Zariel's army lie in wait to descend into the basin and clash with the demons inside.

The inner rim of the basin is fortified with dark iron walls adorned in infernal spikes and countless impaled demon corpses. Further away from the crater, fiendish takes on mortal structures appear: barracks, feeding pits, temples, and forges. The mortals here get little sleep now that the Blood War has spilled out into the Realms.

WARD NAMES

Sections of the city are named after and assigned to the oversight of a single legion, in which a devil known as a Legate enforces Zariel's commands. Some wards are visually distinct from one another, depending on the more eccentric desires of the ruling Legate, however, many serve purely as utilitarian garrisons between excursions to the warfront. There are easily twenty unique wards circling Helldoor's Gate, with names such as:

- Asmodeus's Chosen
- Ichor Imbibers
- Avernus's Rejects
- Debtors of Zariel
- Hell's Justice

More notable than the once-great city itself is what lies above it. Hovering over the vacant ichor-filled crater is Zariel's flying fortress, cutting an imposing silhouette for miles around. This 450-foot-tall structure forged of basalt shaped like a sword blade cuts through the red clouds, staining them with a never-ending flow of blood. It is from here that Zariel commands the defense of the realm from demons.

Helldoor's Gate serves as a grim example of what happens when Avernus arrives in the Sword Coast, with its constant sounding of thrums and clangs as legions of devils descend into the crater to drive back the swaths of demons. Few mortals dare to venture close to Helldoor's Gate out of fear of being dragged into the Blood War. Still, those who understand the stakes appreciate the city for what it is: one of the last lines of defense against utter demonic chaos.

Baldur's Gate was never a delightful place to visit. Helldoor's Gate isn't an improvement.

- Volo

HISTORY

Baldur's Gate was always a place where greed and bloodshed thrived. Following the fall of Elturel, the city sauntered its way deeper into sin and treachery. Some say it was an archdevil bound into the *Shield of the Hidden Lord* that corrupted the souls of the city, but regardless, the city plunged overnight into the ground, out of the Material Plane and into the Nine Hells.

The crater it left behind exposed smugglers' tunnels, evil wizards' secret escape routes, and even the uppermost layers of the Underdark. The demons recently summoned into that land flocked like moths toward the light. When word reached Zariel, the Archduke knew her years of tireless warring in Avernus would mean nothing if the demons claimed the Material Plane.

Asmodeus granted Zariel's request to take legions of devils, equipment, and her flying fortress into the Material Plane to monitor events and stop the demons from utterly consuming the multiverse. Over the years following Zariel's arrival, the city of Helldoor's Gate formed out of necessity rather than design, as the influx of fiendish legions required arming, training, and locations to garrison.

EVENTS OF BALDUR'S GATE: DESCENT INTO AVERNUS

The **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS** assumes the following events happened in *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*:

- Both Baldur's Gate and Elturel were dragged into Avernus.
- Zariel successfully reclaimed and destroyed the Sword of Zariel.
- Neither Bel nor Tiamat rose to contest Zariel's rule.
- The demon lords were too preoccupied with the events of Out of the Abyss to fully invade Avernus.



AT HELLDOR'S GATE,
THE BLOOD WAR SPILLS
INTO THE MATERIAL PLANE

GOVERNMENT

The only governmental system in place for Helldoor's Gate is Zariel's law: devils exist in castes and earn higher degrees of authority, just as in the Nine Hells. Unique to Helldoor's Gate, however, is the inherent militarization of all the fiends. Unlike the many layers where devils are left to idly torment souls or aimlessly scour the lands, every devil in Helldoor's Gate exists solely to confront the demons at every turn.

Each of the twenty-plus wards that Helldoor's Gate is divided into is ruled by a Legate who ensures the maintenance of their troops. Zariel's law is paramount throughout Helldoor's Gate, but how some devils choose to apply those laws falls to the interpretation or motives of each Legate. Some prioritize military might, drilling each devil until they're a killing machine, whereas others try to skulk away from responsibility while claiming the glory of their lessers.

THE BLOODLESS THREE

Within the Nine Hells, a coven of pit fiends called the Dark Eight strategize all the military might of Hell's Armies. On the Sword Coast, there exists a similar group called the Bloodless Three. They coordinate efforts with Zariel but have free jurisdiction to carry out their own orders or task forces. This allows Zariel to focus on the more pressing matters and gives Asmodeus a direct line to the Blood War through his appointed Bloodless Three.

The Bloodless Three have a citadel within Helldoor's Gate for their operations and routinely travel between Faerûn and the Nine Hells. All military decisions proposed by any of the pit fiend generals are put to a vote. Anything that disrupts the Bloodless Three's operation has devastating rippling effects on the entire Blood War effort. To combat this, they're always strategizing three steps ahead of not just their demon rivals, but any who might interfere.

CITIZENRY

If you're neither a devil nor one of Zariel's cultists, Helldoor's Gate isn't the place for you. Each devil sits within a natural hierarchy, usually determined by its martial prowess or number of mortal souls swayed to corruption. Cultists are fortunate enough to sit just above the lowest rung of devils, provided they serve Zariel's commands. Occasionally wayward souls meander toward the pit, perhaps out of an obligation to witness the Blood War or because they've abandoned all hope. Some devils who encounter lost souls bind them with cleverly worded bargains or slay them for practice. Any mortal not in Zariel's Legions stands out in the city like a tanarukk at a tea party.

ECONOMY AND TRADE

Helldoor's Gate forges weapons and armor to serve its own purpose. Unfortunately, Archduke Bel has bottlenecked production of infernal armaments for Zariel's Legion, forcing the fallen angel to turn to the Forgotten Realms. Vecna's Alliance sees the value in providing ingots for two reasons: one, it keeps the demons busy, and two, it keeps the attention of an invading force of devils equally busy.

In exchange, Helldoor's Gate exports a significant amount of demon ichor that countless liches revel in using for study, torture, or studies in torture. Lastly, as expected in a settlement so accustomed to the laws of Avernus, the city still deals in soul coins as a form of currency. It finances bets between devils, fuels their war machines, and in significant amounts, it can pave a devil's way to promotion.

RELIGION

Only two idols are worthy of the worship of those in Helldoor's Gate: Asmodeus and Zariel. The former happily accepts offerings of gold, gems, or souls, whereas Zariel only wants her followers to prove themselves in battle. What better way to show your devotion than to prove yourself as a fierce warrior?

A section of the city is dedicated to cultist rituals for devil summoning. This is how Zariel's Legion replenishes its numbers, and the path from the cultists' district cuts straight into the maw of the Underdark. Some of the cultists are victims of Zariel's manipulation, still believing her to be an angel of Mount Celestia instead of the vengeful soul she truly is.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

The fiends of Zariel's Legion all understand they aren't fighting a war just to pass the eternity. They're doing what the Seven Heavens were too cowardly to do: bearing the brunt of the demons' chaotic carnage to save this world and every world. It's fiendish work, but who else can do it better than devils themselves?

MACHINES OF WAR

Infernal war machines have been imported from Avernus to aid in the war effort. These mountains of spiked metal, blades, and brimstone leave a path of devastation in their wake, powered purely by the annihilation of living souls. This heavy cost means devils reserve them for select situations, such as pushing back a sudden demonic surge, quickly patrolling the outskirts of Helldoor's Gate, and venturing to collect more souls to fuel those machines. If you're ever uncertain whether an infernal war machine is nearby, just listen for the agonized screams of souls being used to ignite a furnace.

HELDDOOR'S GATE ADVENTURES

Helldoor's Gate is a warfront, and if the adventurers are aligned with Zariel's Legion, they'll have no lack of battles to fight or demons to slay. Beyond that, if the adventurers prove themselves useful enough or cunningly devious, they might find themselves adventuring within Helldoor's Gate in unexpected ways:

A Soul's Worth (Low Level). A congregation of Zariel's cultists step beyond the warfront of Helldoor's Gate to recruit members to walk the path of the fallen angel. In their wake, a family living a secluded lifestyle discovers their child, Esme Cloakwood (she/her, neutral human **commoner**), has gone missing. She left a note explaining how she's left to join Zariel and shoulder a cosmic burden. The family implores the adventurers for help. Finding the cultists proves simple enough, and they are happy to return the naive teen... in exchange for one soul.

Behind Abyssal Lines (High Level). There are limits on what a highly trained and honed fiendish strike force can do. In Zariel's eyes, the adventuring party not only has abilities that fiends lack, but even better, they're exceedingly expendable. She offers them an opportunity to assist in the warfront in exchange for favor, a tempting offer that she'll only make once. The task is to rescue a fiendish legion trapped within the deepest pits of the Underdark. Is it a suicide mission or the only chance to gain the favor of an ex-archdevil of the Nine Hells?

I've heard that Asmodeus is quite the eloquent host. If I'm lucky, I may never find out for myself.

- Volo

ICEWIND DALE

Population: 7,670 (46% duergar, 35% ice giants, 9% dwarves, 6% fiends, 4% other races)

Defense: Ice devils allied with the duergar skulk the frozen wastes, guarding against trespassers. Giants survey the landscapes from ice-carved hunting lodges. But no manmade defense is as dangerous as a land this inhospitable.

Organizations: Two organizations compete within Icewind Dale: the giants loyal to Auril and the duergar under Xardorok Sunblight's command. Both are locked in a cold war, hesitant to make the first act of aggression out of fear of retaliation.

Howling winds scatter across a pure white landscape. They call out harsh promises of a gradual and freezing demise, where each step atop the layers of snow threatens to be a wandering soul's last. Any vision is obscured by constant blizzards, the embodiment of Auril the Frostmaiden's fury. After all, Icewind Dale is her ice-carved dream... and an isolating nightmare for the creatures trapped here.

Thanks to the Frostmaiden's spell, the sun never rises over Icewind Dale. It chokes out all light and promise of warmth, warping the landscape under countless blizzards and unrelenting cold. The Sea of Moving Ice has frozen over, allowing the giants to significantly expand the fortress known as Svardborg.

Icewind Dale is so cold that portals to Stygia, the fifth layer of the Nine Hells, form naturally among the ice. Legions of ice devils under Asmodeus's command have flocked through those portals to assist the duergar in claiming Icewind Dale as their own. Meanwhile, giant and duergar alike face white dragons emboldened by Tiamat's return. Perhaps the best one can hope for in Icewind Dale is to be set on fire, so that at least one's final moments will be warm ones.

EVENTS OF ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN

The **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS** assumes the following events happened in *Storm King's Thunder*, *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, and *Tomb of Annihilation*.

- The Frostmaiden was not stopped from casting her spell each and every night.
- Xardorok Sunblight is uncontested in claiming Icewind Dale for the duergar. Their construct, the chardalyn dragon, burned down many of the Ten Towns. The duergar are unaware that their demigoddess Deep Duerra is actually Asmodeus in disguise.
- Jarl Storvald and the frost giants were unsuccessful in reclaiming the *Ring of Winter*, which remains in Artus Cimber's possession.

HISTORY

In the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS**, no one halted Auril's nightly spells to keep Icewind Dale in a perpetual winter. What residents didn't flee south eventually succumbed to the gelid conditions. Concurrently, the demonic horde that poured from the Abyss into the Underdark displaced countless underground cities of drow and duergar alike. Xardorok Sunblight emerged from the depths below the Spine of the World, vowing that it was Deep Duerra's will for the duergar to claim Icewind Dale as their own. And so they claimed it, adapting from a life underground to one in the permanent night of the Frostmaiden's domain. As Icewind Dale stands now, all of Ten Towns have been destroyed, reclaimed by duergar, or left full of humanoid ice sculptures as eerie frozen reminders of what civilization used to be.

GOVERNMENT

Icewind Dale now only exists as a string of settlements claimed by frost giants, duergar, or white dragons. The only remains of Ten Towns are picturesque frozen villages, icy snapshots of lives once lived. Both frost giants and duergar follow a strict hierarchy with a sole figure leading.

Jarl Storvald claimed his rightful place as mightiest of the frost giants. He instills confidence in the giants, ensuring they worship and make offerings to their new deity Auril, in hopes she brings forth the Age of Everlasting Ice. Occasionally, frost giants rise to question his rule, only to be crushed in contests of strength, endurance, and might. Beyond their new fortress-capital, Svardborg, frost giant lodges scour the wastes outside of the duergar's claimed territory.

As for the duergar, they answer to Xardorok Sunblight, who declared himself Iceking when his Sunblight clan took in the grim duergar refugees of the Underdark. Asmodeus' subtle influence has instilled a harsher hierarchy, where those who don't prove their value are treated brutally before being discarded into the wastes.

CITIZENRY

The citizenry of Icewind Dale can be crudely sorted into two categories: frost giants and duergar, both taking all the precautions necessary to survive in the harshest conditions imaginable. The duergar returned underground, wary of digging too deep and connecting to the Underdark. They've become equally wary of caverns as they are the cold. Even Iceking Sunblight's promises of leading the duergar in the name of their goddess have done little to change the unwavering pessimism. Doomsayers are becoming more frequent—and their arguments grow ever more convincing.

By contrast, the frost giant's natural resistance to the cold acclimated them nicely, allowing them to continue business as usual. The frost giants' alliance with Auril only further boosted their confidence that they deserve to sit at the top of the ordning. Frost giants from the far corners have started to venture into Icewind Dale, bolstering the giants' already impressive numbers, but their diminishing food supplies present a crisis in the making.

Survival becomes ever more challenging thanks to the perpetual night and cold temperatures that make the frozen lair of the Nine Hells, Stygia, feel like a warm breeze. The majority of flora and fauna can no longer survive in the harsh winter. Most residents survive by consuming deep roots, hunting the thickest woolled beasts, or ice fishing.

*It really says something
about the state of the world
when ice devils hardly sound
world-ending in comparison.*
- Volo

ECONOMY AND TRADE

A mountain range called the Spine of the World cuts Icewind Dale off from the rest of the Sword Coast, making it hard for residents of Icewind Dale to import goods. Out of necessity, the frost giants have established a trade route with hill giants, in which the frost giants secure food in exchange for bone weaponry and trophies.

The duergar didn't broker nearly as good a deal for their food sources: they trade chardalyn arms to Zariel's Legion, unaware that Asmodeus steered his two vassal kingdoms into a tentative alliance.

RELIGION

The duergar believe their goddess of conquest, Deep Duerra, helped them escape the encroaching demonic hordes of the Underdark and claim Icewind Dale. They've been fooled, however: when they worship at their idols and shrines, their prayers don't reach Deep Duerra, but the archdevil Asmodeus. The duergar are ignorant of the ranging broods of ice devils that assisted their rise every step of the way.

As for Auril the Frostmaiden, most of her followers either fled due to dwindling supplies or fell at the hands of the duergar. She'd nearly lost all her

worshippers in the north before an unlikely ally emerged: the frost giants. Their search for the *Ring of Winter* proved futile, but Jarl Storvald became convinced the ring they call *The Ice That Never Melts* was simply a metaphor for the Frostmaiden. The giants readily accepted Auril as their matron goddess who shared their vision of covering the world in ice.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

Icewind Dale holds countless secrets and stories waiting to thaw out—as long as you can survive the looming duergar, devils, giants, and dragons.

NECROPOLIS

Vecna slowly chips away at the ice hiding the fallen city of Ythryn. It's only a matter of time before his minions uncover the secrets of the Empire of Netheril's fall and claim Necropolis and the ancient artifacts within.

WHITE DRAGONS

With Tiamat's return, dragons blackened the skies under flapping wings. For the ancient white dragons, few territories look as tempting to claim as Icewind Dale. These near-daily invasions keep both the duergar and frost giants busy, but facing a dragon is a more appealing fate than withering in starvation.

ICEWIND DALE ADVENTURES

Many seek the cold embrace of Icewind Dale as a means to escape, as the land offers none. Between the ice giants and the duergar, those who brave the cold will surely find adventure:

Establishing Contact (Mid Level). Most outsiders believe the dwarfholds vanished overnight. If there is any hope of a dwarf city remaining, it is the isolated Ironmaster. A desperate dwarf, Ranmund Glongehk (they/them, lawful good dwarf **guard**) asks the heroes to learn Ironmaster's fate. But surviving the blistering cold of Icewind Dale is the first challenge, and breaking past the ice-covered gates of Ironmaster proves to be no easier. Inside, the adventurers find that not only are the people of Ironmaster still alive—they're secretly thriving. Now the heroes must ensure the settlement remains secret, lest it suffer the same fate as the other dwarfholds.

Thawing the Ice Devils (High Level). Auril, the ice giants, and the dwarves of Ironmaster all see the duergar settlements for what they are: a mere front for Asmodeus. How else can the mass of ice devils be explained? Regardless of why they're here, the many frigid rifts to Stygia must be closed. Xardorok Sunblight and the ice devils won't go easily, and before the deed is done, blood will cover the snow.

QU'MADOSFAN DELMAH

Population: 8,290 (32% drow, 20% humans, 16% elves, 12% halflings, 20% other races).

Defense: The fleet's first defense is its mobility, but anyone who gets close is met with cannonfire. The fastest ships belong to elite Bregan D'aerthe crews who intercept the most dangerous attackers. As a last line of defense, magic-users ensure smooth sailing for the fleet and summon dangerous storms to sink enemies beneath the waves.

Organizations: To add your vessel to the Qu'madosfan Delmah fleet, you must first swear allegiance to Bregan D'aerthe, which controls every aspect of the fleet under Jarlaxle's command. But remnants of the factions of old—once-proud initiates of the Emerald Enclave, Harpers, and the Order of the Gauntlet—exist within Qu'madosfan Delmah in tiny contingents.

Qu'madosfan Delmah (Elvish for “ocean home”) isn't a city in the traditional sense, but a fleet of ships of all shapes and sizes, all sailing united under the Bregan D'aerthe banner. Refugees, sailors, families—everyone who fled the Sword Coast by taking to the sea—eventually found their way to join the mass of fleets. To date, Qu'madosfan Delmah consists of over seventy vessels, from galleons and longboats to little dinghies.

Each day is divided into a number of smaller periods, known as “anchor-set” and “anchor-rise.” Any number of anchor-sets and anchor-rises can occur each day, depending on factors like weather, food supplies, and proximity to land masses. Anchor-set provides a brief respite, where all the ships come to a stop and the crews drop wooden walkways to create an ever-changing network of paths between ships. Each ship's Mallasargtlin—its captain—does their best to keep in formation to not considerably change the makeshift city's layout, but they may as well try emptying the ocean. At anchor-rise the fleet's planks are retracted, sails are raised, and the ships move again.

The curiously constructed Qu'madosfan Delmah has numerous monikers: Floating City, Sailor's Heaven, and even Last Hope. Some say Qu'madosfan Delmah is the last place in the Realms with any sense of community, and they wouldn't be wrong. Jarlaxle is proud of what he has created, and if he isn't behind the wheel of the *Scarlet Marpenoth* leading the entire fleet, he's in disguise, walking the planks at anchor-set to admire the folk who give his city life. For all his swashbuckling, Jarlaxle ultimately believes every ship in the Ocean Home belongs to him, the

maestro, the puppet master, who even in exile pulls numerous strings—sometimes with hardly a hint of what's at the other end.

HISTORY

Qu'madosfan Delmah had a selfish origin. Ousted from Waterdeep, with Luskan only days from falling to Vecna's forces, Jarlaxle found his many schemes and machinations collapsing before his eyes. He fled with a few ships, a few members of the Bregan D'aerthe, and his own submersible—the *Scarlet Marpenoth*—to start over among the island nations.

Ever the opportunist, Jarlaxle offered wealthy or powerful refugees safe passage from the Sword Coast, planting the seed of what would become Qu'madosfan Delmah. It took a number of years for the fleet to bolster its numbers, but during its time in Waterdeep, the Bregan D'aerthe became accustomed to connecting three or more ships together. That tradition continued despite the ever-growing number of vessels, even as they added non-drow ones that required craftier lashing. Now the floating city is nearly as cosmopolitan as any mainland metropolis ever was.

GOVERNMENT

Qu'madosfan Delmah operates under a council of Mallasargtlins who vote on laws, destinations, and expansions of the fleet. The results of these votes aren't binding, but rather, presented to Jarlaxle to have the final say. It's rare for Jarlaxle to disregard the wishes of the majority, but occasionally his ambitions or machinations take priority. Each Mallasargtlin, through virtue of their rank, is granted a seat at the council, but those who also act as lieutenants of Bregan D'aerthe receive discretely favorable treatment. Jarlaxle is keen to play the diplomat, ensuring that everyone's needs are met to avoid the unpleasanties of a mutiny. He speaks privately with each Mallasargtlin on a routine basis, mostly to ensure there are no surprises during a council meeting. Mallasargtlins rotate ships whenever one wishes for a change, loses their crew's favor (or Jarlaxle's), or gets unceremoniously flung overboard during a storm.

CITIZENRY

The varied citizens of the Ocean Home all want to flee the perils of the Sword Coast. They saw the tides shifting toward utter destruction and opted to take their chances aboard a ship. Their subsequent years at sea forced many to learn new skills, and it's rare to meet anyone who can't operate a sail and tie a knot. Many entrepreneurial lads and lasses aspire to captain a ship's helm.

Magically gifted individuals—wizards, sorcerers, bards, and their ilk—are held in high regard across the Ocean Home, mostly because they provide a consistent supply of food, water, and defense against torrential weather. Sailors still cook traditional food whenever they can, however, because conjured food is no better than hardtack.

The citizens of Ocean Home truly believe that “a high tide raises all ships.” They recognize that their individual ships are far stronger together than apart, frequently marveling during anchor-set that this floating city exists because of their collaborative effort. When the weather is kind and the seas are calm, the few remaining optimists even find peace within Qu’madosfan Delmah.

ECONOMY AND TRADE

As a roaming city of ships, bartering is the name of the game, and currency is rarely used except in trade with outsiders. It falls to the shoulders of each Mallasargtlin to ensure they have enough supplies between supply runs, in which a small fleet breaks away to dock with the chosen island nation to conduct trade. There isn’t a single dock in the Sword Coast that can handle the entire fleet at once.

Some Mallasargtlins opt to pillage luxuries for their own crew or for other Mallasargtlins with expensive taste. Others enter formal trade agreements to mutually share their supplies, whereas some remain frugal, expecting the tides to turn at any point. At the very least, the Bregan D’aerthe cracks down on thieves, usurious transactions, and dragonlike hoarders to maintain fair trade between ships.

RELIGION

Throughout history, the gods have rarely responded to prayers, so few within the fleet realize their prayers now fall entirely unheard. All religions are welcome among the fleet, assuming their rituals and prayers don’t require mortal sacrifice, acts of violence, disruption of trade, or excessive noise. Some of the larger ships have been transformed into makeshift temples of common gods including Talos, Tymora, Umberlee, Ilmater, and Oghma. Oghma’s temple-ship even contains a library of books, tomes, and scrolls, which all residents are welcome to pursue during anchor-set.

Given the shift from a life on land to one perpetually at sea, worshipers flock now to both Talos and Umberlee. Storms are deadly, and the unpredictable waves and tumultuous wind often claim the lives of

the misfortunate. Donations and prayers to these two gods of the tempest are feeble attempts to placate the weather, but in times like these, faith still provides a modicum of comfort... a feeling that’s all too fleeting.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

Qu’madosfan Delmah’s people maintain every possible semblance of normality, mirroring the life many once held on solid land. Over the years the civilians have adapted, and the younger generation knows nothing other than a life at sea. Compared to the alternative, life aboard the Ocean Home is good.

SEA FESTIVALS

To break up the monotony of sea life, many festivals akin to those in Waterdeep are held every other tenday. New festivals bolster morale and keep the flame of civilization alight. The citizens of Qu’madosfan Delmah establish traditions of their own, fostering healthy competitions of strength and mastery over the ocean that once seemed so daunting. Notable sea festivals include the Day of Delmah Ocean, where a ring of ships claims a section of the sea for a day and a night, and Umberlee’s Grace, where an empty ship is set alight and allowed to sink as a sacrifice to the Seamother.

QU’MADOSFAN DELMAH ADVENTURES

Life aboard a vessel can often feel mind-numbingly repetitive. Thankfully, for members of Bregan D’aerthe, it’s true what they say about the ocean: adventure truly waits beyond the horizon. An action-oriented adventurer might find themselves drawn into one of the following:

Shipwreck Reconnaissance (Low Level). Nhilffyn Myrae (she/her, lawful neutral drow **swashbuckler**) approaches the adventuring party with a proposition. The fleet is quickly approaching a spot where they previously lost a vessel in an unforgiving storm. The heroes are asked to drink *potions of water breathing* and dive below the depths to return with salvage. Unfortunately, the shipwreck has since been claimed by merrow, who won’t take the intrusion lightly.

Turning Tides (High Level). The Bregan D’aerthe faces a constant threat from Olhydra, the Princess of Evil Water, whose reign extends far beyond the Throne of Primordial Unity into the Sea of Swords. The fleet offers to bait Olhydra into coming out if the heroes agree to pacify, negotiate with, or outright slay the elemental nuisance. If the heroes can pull this one off, all of Qu’madosfan Delmah will be in their debt.

SOARING CITADEL OF THE DRAGON QUEEN

FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE WELL OF DRAGONS

Population: 4,790 (56% dragons, 16% dragonborn, 6% tieflings, 22% other races).

Defense: Two thousand dragons take to the skies around the Soaring Citadel. All other defenses are mundane by comparison.

Organizations: The citadel belongs to Tiamat and the Cult of the Dragon, who control and influence the whole area. Given Tiamat's history within the Nine Hells, it's not uncommon for representatives or war bands from Zariel's Legion to visit for trade, negotiations, or tribute to placate the Dragon Queen.

Tiamat's throne, the bastion of dragons, soars among the clouds. At the heart of the citadel stands the Temple of Tiamat, its five asymmetric towers topped with twisted steeples, one per chromatic dragon. The temple has grown even more grandiose and daunting than during its days within the Nine Hells, and Tiamat resides within the central chamber atop the hoard of all hoards. A sea of platinum coins, artifacts of untold power, and glimmering treasures make for a bed befitting the Dragon Queen.

In the pit left behind when the dragons' lair rose into the sky, pools of molten lava form, along with a network of tunnels that countless dragons call home. Ancient dragons are often thought of as immortal, but they do eventually die of old age. Those nearing the end of their lifespan still come to this place, once called the Well of Dragons, and continually line the chasm with their bones. The routine blasting of the *Draakhorn* from the citadel echoes for thousands of miles around, rallying the dragons or delivering messages of Tiamat's desires.

The surrounding landscape has been gradually warped to better accommodate each type of chromatic dragon, from winding cavern tunnels and black fathomless depths to frigid mountain tops and verdant forests. The forces of the Cult of the Dragon largely garrison around the end of the Sunset Mountains in a string of settlements that double as dragon lairs.

HISTORY

Tiamat, goddess of evil dragons, has a long and sordid history of greedily clutching onto power whenever she emerges. When Tiamat was imprisoned within the first layer of the Nine Hells, she aligned herself with the archdevil Asmodeus. For generations, she schemed and plotted her escape, communing with her followers to guide them into

assembling the *Mask of the Dragon Queen*. With this artifact, the Cult of the Dragon summoned their Queen back to the Material Plane, and Tiamat took to the skies of Toril for the first time in centuries.

Dark days quickly ensued. Tiamat devastated huge swaths of the land with dragonfire, backed by countless flights of dragons. Each settlement and soul caught in the flames fed the *Soulmonger* until it was full to the brim, ushering forth Vecna's fabled return. Emboldened by victory, Tiamat and Vecna clashed, quickly realizing their battle would lead to their mutual destruction. And so, Vecna reluctantly called for parley.

As the dust settled, Tiamat returned to her temple in the Well of Dragons. She ordered her followers to raise her temple into the clouds, a perch and throne befitting the Queen of Dragons. And so, the Soaring Citadel of the Dragon Queen took to the skies, elevated by countless dracoliches and Netherese magic. From there, Tiamat followed her avaricious heart, amassing wealth in numbers never seen before in the Forgotten Realms.

The Queen's work isn't done, however; while she bides her time and plots against Vecna, disloyal dragons still hold territories unclaimed by her kin. Plus, until all giants have been wiped off this world, there is little rest to be had. The Soaring Citadel is rife with activity, thanks to thousands of followers offering gifts to satiate the Queen at all hours of the day. For a Queen who was trapped in Avernus for eons, Tiamat is content to wait a little longer.

GOVERNMENT

Tiamat is the sole dictator of the Soaring Citadel, and her word is final. She does, however, entertain advisors and pleas for assistance. Her closest advisors are a cabal of dracoliches. While many dragons turned to necromancy to sever ties with their Queen, they quickly decided upon her arrival in the Material Plane that siding with her was the best option to ensure their prolonged survival. Tiamat also maintains a rotating collection of wyrm consorts who benefit from being so closely associated with her.

Beneath those advisors, mature dragons jockey for power. The weakest dragons are white dragons. From there, black, green, and blue dragons are each more powerful than the last, and red dragons are the most powerful of all. (Still, the strongest white dragon would make a snack out of a weakest red dragon.)

If the citadel weren't the home of Tiamat, the structure would almost be a wonder to behold.

- Volo

CITIZENRY

Only those who prove themselves to the Cult of the Dragon are permitted to stay within the Soaring Citadel, and this is frequently in positions of indentured servitude. Many dragonborn and tieflings call the citadel home, as Tiamat's edicts declare that those of draconic and infernal bloodline are superior to others and welcomed in her land. Beyond this, the temple is full of diverse humanoids—some kept by dragons as collectible commodities, others as walking meals.

The less “collectible” humanoids, including the majority of the cultists, would consider themselves lucky to ever set foot on the Soaring Citadel. The cultists instead live huddling in makeshift settlements that live in the perpetual shadow of dragons. Each settlement worships a particular chromatic dragon, and one or more Wearers of Purple are at the dragon's every beck and call. Only the Wyrmspeakers and their trusted allies live within temple quarters, in luxurious and decadent chambers—while their “collectible” humanoids discover how uncomfy a pile of treasure can be to sleep atop.

EVENTS OF TYRANNY OF DRAGONS

The **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS** assumes the following events happened in the *Tyranny of Dragons*:

- The red dragon Wyrmspeaker, Severin Silrajin, successfully gathered the five parts of the *Mask of the Dragon Queen* and freed Tiamat from Avernus. As “thanks,” Tiamat immediately devoured him.
- Many of the forces of the Lord's Alliance, Order of the Gauntlet, and Emerald Enclave were slain.
- With the Dragon Queen returned, she declared that any mask in her image was sacrilegious and ordered the *Mask of the Dragon Queen* to be split back into its five parts. In truth, Tiamat considers anyone with the completed mask a threat, and she knows Vecna would find it more challenging to claim five parts than a united mask.



EVIL DRAGONS ARE FOUND EN MASSE
WITHIN THE SOARING CITADEL

ECONOMY AND TRADE

The Soaring Citadel knows no economy and is the embodiment of greed and avarice where gold, gems, and monuments are sent to be hoarded. Wealth flows into the throne of Tiamat, but rarely leaves or is even touched. Tiamat and all chromatic dragons under her command have little they would wish to purchase—if they desired something, they would simply take it.

As the ongoing war with the giants drags on, members of the Cult of the Dragon exchange giant skulls for their weight in gold or magic items. Hunting giants without the assistance of dragons is a fool's errand, but some cultists believe it's their only way to prove their worth.

RELIGION

All denizens of the Soaring Citadel worship and pray to the Dragon Queen, Tiamat—and increasingly, survivors who find their deities no longer answer their prayers turn toward her as well. She rarely answers, but at least her existence is proven. Whether one worships out of reverence or fear, it matters little to the Queen as long as her hoard of wealth continues to grow. Weekly tithes are expected from every living entity in the citadel, and many dragons gather donations from all their minions, turning them over in one grand delivery in hopes of receiving a compliment from the Queen. But Tiamat grows aloof and not all that glitters is gold; now, only victory over Vecna will please her.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

Outside of carefully balancing Tiamat's fickle desires and navigating the hierarchy of the Cult of the Dragon, here is some other useful information that influences the daily activities of the Soaring Citadel of the Dragon Queen:

HOLDERS OF THE DRAGON MASKS

The *Mask of the Dragon Queen* brought Tiamat into this world, but she deemed it more suitable to split the crown into its five core parts, establishing a hierarchy in the occasionally useful Cult of the Dragon. Each Wyrmspeaker wears their respective mask, commanding unquestioning respect from cultists and token recognition from most dragons. The five Wyrmspeakers are as follows:

Blark Towersmasher, the Red Wyrmspeaker (he/him, chaotic neutral goliath **warlord**). Blark aims his relentless fury at the giants. He curiously rose to Wyrmspeaker for his ability to pummel dragons into submission, which the ancient red dragons found entertaining.

Kren, the Blue Wyrmspeaker (he/him, lawful evil elf **lich**). Kren is a deeply methodical individual of unwarranted arcane power. It's rare for someone to match a blue dragon's prowess for deception, but Kren is a triple agent. He spies for Vecna but would turn on the God-King the moment an opportunity presented itself.

Nuphod "Goldlungs" Morquill, the Green

Wyrmspeaker (she/her, chaotic evil green dragon-born **enchanter**). Goldlungs weaves song, fables, and stories as much as she weaves lies. While her musical talent is unquestionable, Goldlungs has an uncanny habit of convincing everyone to see her side of things.

Rezmir, the Black Wyrmspeaker (she/her, neutral evil half-black dragon; stat block in *Hoard of the Dragon Queen*). A relentless and cruel warrior, Rezmir single-handedly thwarted an adventuring group from claiming the *Black Dragon Mask*.

Breeze, the White Wyrmspeaker (they/them, neutral water genasi **warlord**). Breeze is a genasi of few words, but their ferocious nature rivals any glacial wyrm. They strike like a blizzard—without warning, mercy, or reason.

CLASH OF GIANTS

Dragons and giants are born enemies, it seems, destined to clash until the world ends. Every giant wants to slay dragons to prove they belong on the top of the new ordning—the giants' social hierarchy.

SOARING CITADEL ADVENTURES

Whether through association with the Cult of the Dragon or coercion by a dragon, adventures within the Soaring Citadels are do-or-die:

Wurm's Request (Mid Level). Valorin (he/him, lawful evil **young blue dragon**) wants to become a personal consort to the Dragon Queen, but he must first start small—and he commands the adventurers' assistance. Some abandoned treasure trove of gold or a magical item from a nearby dwarfhold should suffice. He'd never admit that he's worried the orcs, goblins, and monsters that moved in might actually be able to kill him.

A Giant-Sized Problem (High Level). Rumors of the adventuring party's success have finally reached the ears of the Dragon Queen herself. She imperiously summons them to an audience and offers them a chance to join her. All they need to do is deliver the head of any of the giant leaders. Will they spurn Tiamat, and if so, how long will it take until she exacts revenge?

THRONE OF PRIMORDIAL UNITY

FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE DESSARIN VALLEY

Population: 10,280 (30% elementals, 23% genasi, 17% humans, 5% elves, 25% other races).

Defense: The city's first line of defense is the inhospitable weather and terrain of the four elements: heat, wind, tremors, and high waves. Any who survive beyond the outer circle are confronted by legions of cultists and servile elementals. In times of dire need, the Princes of Elemental Evil stride into battle themselves, where their mere appearance wards off foes.

Organizations: The four lesser cults that comprise the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye fight amongst each other for dominance, but they all come together to crush any fifth faction that tries to plant roots here.

The Throne of Primordial Unity is a city dedicated to the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye and its four sub-cults: Black Earth, Crushing Wave, Eternal Flame and Howling Hatred. All cults have equal standing within the city, putting aside any differences to maintain civility and order. The streets spiral toward the center, past the houses of high-ranking cultists and shrines that bind powerful elementals, until they meet at an inverted ziggurat in the center of the city. Within that ziggurat is a vacant throne. It's here that the cults await the return of the Elder Elemental Eye and conduct business of primordial unity.

Although the city is united, the outer circle highlights the fundamental divide that previously kept all the cults apart. Each cult controls a different quarter of terrain that surrounds the city, and their Princes of Elemental Evil shape their quarter to their liking.

Imix's domain of fire is a flattened wasteland of ash and soot. All former wildlife fell victim to wildfires or the persistent smog that rolls across the landscape. Roads of volcanic fissures line the landscape, making the entire region inhospitable for anyone who can't handle the heat. To the south of that rises Ogremoch's sculpted territory of earth. Tunnels wind through mountainous peaks and deep caverns, and unpredictable seismic tremors frequently reshape the land. Here, it pays to be careful where you step.

On the other side of the throne are the territories of a body of water claimed by Olhydra and the floating icescape of Yan-C-Bin. The quarter dedicated to water is more akin to a deep basin, filled to the brim with water and sporadic islands. Untamed and vengeful waves form in the basin, ensuring none may sail without paying a dear price. Lastly, Yan-C-Bin's domain climbs high into the clouds with perilously

sharp peaks, the exact opposite of Olhydra's. A constant frigid cold howls eerily as fierce winds cut through the air, carrying a torrent of debris in their wake. Each gust sharpens the mountain peaks like daggers preparing to piece the sky.

For elemental minded individuals, the Throne of Primordial Unity is an elemental haven in its purest unbridled form. For non-cultists, it holds the closest proximity of four divergent terrains that are dangerous in their own right without all the cultists or elementals present. Few survive long enough to reach the throne itself, but all that awaits them is the fury of the elements.

HISTORY

Once, the widely populated Dessarin Valley contained the settlements of Red Larch, Triboar, and Westbridge, as well as the city of Yartar. But unbeknownst to the people of the valley, the Cult of Elemental Evil worked beneath their feet in the dwarven redoubt of Tyar-Besil. Within that castle in the Sumber Hills, each cult opened portals to the elemental planes, summoning forth the Princes of Elemental Evil. With their arrival, untold destruction awaited all of Dessarin Valley.

After the dust had settled and the valley was theirs, the four princes combined their forces to reshape all of the Dessarin Valley. The land was divided into four quarters, one for each prince to claim as their own dominion outside of their elemental plane. Where the four corners met would be their capital, the Throne of Primordial Unity. The four lords of Elemental Evil plotted their next move, a planar prison break to free their master Tharizdun from his abyssal prison. They turned to the only entity they believed powerful enough: Vecna.

In exchange for shaping portions of the Sword Coast to his liking, Vecna cast a powerful ritual in Silverymoon, summoning Tharizdun—chains and all. The princes move with caution and acquiesce to Vecna's demands, because if anyone knows how to kill their god, it's the God of Death.

And so, the Throne of Primordial Unity sits vacant, calling out for Tharizdun to claim it and usher in his reign of corruption. Until then, all the Princes of Elemental Evil can do is obey Vecna's commands and bide their time. One thing is guaranteed: when the fury of the elementals is finally unleashed, they will never yield.

The small plot of land carved out around the Throne of Primordial Unity is almost tranquil, a reminder of how things used to be.

- Volo

GOVERNMENT

Despite unifying, each cult still maintains independent city-states and governs their respective followers as they see fit. It's only when they must deal with the world beyond the Dessarin Valley that all four cults unite for the Council of the Elder Elemental Eye. Each elemental prophet—and on rare occasions, one or all elemental princes—gather there to discuss plans or prioritize threats against their way of life.

While the elemental cults are no longer enemies, the lowest ranks all hold rivalries with one another. This misplaced competitive nature dwindles as the elites rise through the ranks of government, and the most powerful all share the united vision of ensuring Tharizdun's safe return.

Each Cult operates under strict laws, believing in the destructive power of their chosen element; each has little issue in turning it on traitors. Impure thoughts are burned away by the Eternal Flame, those who restrict liberty are choked out by the Howling Hatred, the stubborn are met with torrents of fury by the Crushing Wave, and abusing what the earth freely gives is met with the weight of a mountain by the Black Earth.

CITIZENRY

Races and people of all walks of life find their way into the ranks of the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye. In fact, the Throne of Primordial Unity offers an unparalleled diversity of people, from aarakocra of the skies, tritons from the sea, or dwarves of the earth. Anyone with an affiliation to a certain element is welcome to contribute. Oblivious new recruits might never learn how far the cult would go to keep nonbelievers away from its fickle utopia.

The bulk of the citizenry are trained to work alongside the beasts that each elemental cult favors. The Black Earth is fascinated by burrowing creatures like bulettes, while the Howling Hatred raises hippogriffs and griffons. It isn't uncommon for aspirants to be rewarded with a young animal to tend and bond with.

EVENTS OF PRINCES OF THE APOCALYPSE

The **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS** assumes the following events happened in the *Princes of the Apocalypse*:

- The Princes of Elemental Evil were ushered from their realm into the Forgotten Realms.
- All the elemental cults united under the banner of the Elder Elemental Eye.
- The Elder Elemental Eye is a false persona created by Tharizdun, the deity who formed the Abyss.

ECONOMY AND TRADE

Outside of the four elemental quarters, the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye had enough foresight to establish smaller farming settlements to become self-sufficient. All trading and economy is coordinated between the different cults, ensuring ample supplies of food and resources.

Each elemental cult plays their part—the Cult of the Black Earth discovers ores without the need for mining, passing them to the Cult of the Eternal Flame, who use unquenchable fires to forge weapons or armor. Meanwhile, the Cult of the Crushing Wave provides drinkable water, irrigation, and sewer systems, and the Cult of the Howling Wind shapes the wind to make it difficult for even dragons to fly through, repelling outsiders.

A twisted normality pervades the Throne of Primordial Unity, as if this is the world that could exist had Vecna not risen to power. Their combined elemental might has proven enough to ward off dragon threats or Vecna's forces, but the balance is precarious. Most of the Princes of Elemental Evil would sooner flee to their home planes than risk destruction.

RELIGION

Members of each of the four cults continue to worship their respective elemental prince, listen to lessons from their prophet, and provide frequent sacrifices to please their overlords. Only those within the highest pinnacles of the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye actively pray to or idealize Tharizdun the Chained. Many common cultists are entirely unaware of the cult's affiliation to the deity who forged the Abyss; revealing it could be the cults' own undoing.

The prophets know Tharizdun is trapped somewhere within Vecna's clutches, since he speaks to them in lucid visions. Tharizdun requires constant worship to remain strong, and the Princes of Elemental Evil empower him with rituals that their followers don't fully understand. Since Tharizdun's return, many of the citizens have taken an apocalyptic view on life. With the world in chaos, it's a just deed to end the world—and its suffering. Many followers hear the wild babbling of Tharizdun, entirely unaware of its subconscious calls for elemental cataclysm. Tharizdun created one Abyss that gazes into all, and in this goal, at least, he and the demons are concerningly ideologically aligned.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

As a region and faction split into four parts, the cults have numerous important figures with conflicting ideals, strengths, and flaws. The elementals and prophets are intelligent enough to put any differences aside, but exploiting a weak link could cause the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye to falter.

ELEMENTAL PROPHETS

Opposite the Princes of Elemental Evil stand their mortal counterparts, the prophets who paved the road in order for the elemental portals to be opened, and whose elemental power is only surpassed by the princes' themselves. (The stat block for each prophet is presented in *Princes of the Apocalypse*.)

Vanifer, Fire Prophet. Vanifer (she/her, neutral evil tiefling) burned both literal and figurative bridges to get where she is. She knows how fire captivates and entices, using that to manipulate others and achieve what she desires. Those who play with fire and outlive their usefulness eventually get burned.

Marlos Urnrayle, Earth Prophet. Marlos (he/him, neutral evil medusa) is enamored with jewelry of gold, silver, and gems. He was a noble of high society until a fateful encounter turned him into a medusa, solidifying his contemptuous attitude toward his lessers. Those who don't see eye-to-eye with Marlos's methods are simply turned to stone.

Gar Shatterkeel, Water Prophet. After a life of hardship, Gar (he/him, neutral evil human) found himself stranded at sea. After a shark chomped off his left arm, he'd all but lost hope when a sudden current carried him to the safety of the shore—and for that, Gar believes he owes his life to the sea. Despite his hatred toward all others, Gar fights his nature to better serve his position as Prophet. After all, water eventually erodes all it touches, and Gar is exceedingly patient.

Aerisi Kalinoth, Air Prophet. Aerisi (she/her, neutral evil moon elf) carries herself with the regality of a queen. Illusionary wings curl around her as she graciously allows the bards of her court to entertain her. Behind the air of nobility, she possesses a raging storm that can't be tamed. Aerisi is the kind to leave all she meets breathless, one way or another.

PRINCES OF ELEMENTAL EVIL

From their respective elemental planes of existence, the Princes of Elemental Evil have tainted cores. It was these four princes who were tricked by Tharizdun into believing he's their creator; perhaps if there were irrefutable evidence of his ruse, they would turn on the master they fanatically serve. (The stat block for each prince is presented in *Princes of the Apocalypse*.)

Imix, Prince of Evil Fire. Imix (he/him, neutral evil elemental) is a pillar of pure fire with all the fury and wanton destruction the element embodies. With a temperament like his element, there is little rhyme or reason to his actions, for none can truly predict the whims of fire.

Ogremoch, Prince of Evil Earth. Known also as the Mountain That Walks, Ogremoch (he/him, neutral evil elemental) has a humanoid form of rock and crystal. He believes all the earth, from its minerals to its precious gems, belong to him. To take even a copper nugget without his blessing is to feel the full weight of a mountain upon you.

Olhydra, Princess of Evil Water. Appearing as a titan of a great wave, Olhydra (she/her, neutral evil elemental) lurks in bodies of water far larger than herself. She sees all who dare traverse her waters as sacrifices, smashing their vessels until the ocean is stained red. Olhydra is both a torrent of unrelenting force and the gentle eroding of the waves—and to the chagrin of her foes, she knows exactly when to switch between the two extremes.

Yan-C-Bin, Prince of Evil Air. It's rare that Yan-C-Bin (he/him, neutral evil elemental) ever shows his physical appearance; instead, he's found in the howling breeze or the dancing gust of cold. None of the elemental princes can match him for wisdom or malice. Yan-C-Bin is believed to have few enemies—which is true in part, as those who oppose him are ambushed and suffocated, their very breath caught on the wind.

THRONE OF PRIMORDIAL UNITY ADVENTURES

For those who align themselves with the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye, the Throne offers a wealth of opportunities to help reinforce their standing in the Sword Coast.

Test of Resolve (Low Level). Those who wish to prove themselves and join the cult are commonly tasked with collecting raw material from each of the four elemental quadrants of Dessarin Valley. Countless aspirants try, but few return successful—or at all. The party might be asked to search for someone who has tried and failed to return, or they might even wish to attempt the task themselves.

One Less Seat at the Throne (Epic Level). The Princes of Elemental Evil remain united for as long as they believe they can free Tharizdun. However, tempers grow short and patience wears thin; knowing that Tharizdun has been forcibly taken from them, the princes' attention slowly turns inwards. The Throne sits on the verge of civil war—now it falls to the adventuring party to either negotiate peace or tip the scales.

WATERDEEP

Population: 754,680 (44% humans, 6% elves, 5% halflings, 3% gnomes, 2% half-orcs, 15% undead, 25% other races).

Defense: The City of Splendor has two magical defenses: the invisible dragonward which keeps Tiamat (and her brood) at bay, and the building-sized Walking Statues of Waterdeep that constantly patrol the city, squashing wrongdoers with impunity. Beyond the magical protections, numerous sections of the city are claimed by legions of undead, acting as an “unnatural” deterrent. When a more organized defense is required than the aimless undead, Waterdeep is further supported by a standing army of the Zhentarim.

Organizations: A contingent of the Zhentarim loyal to Manshoon patrols the city, stamping out rebellion. Manshoon maintains a tense alliance with the city’s most infamous resident: Vecna, the Whispered One. The most trustworthy (or easily manipulated) associates of Vecna’s Alliance gather here occasionally.

Waterdeep is not the City of Splendors it once was. Tyrannical leaders abuse their power. The streets are often deserted save for patrols of Zhentarim who enforce twisted laws, while every back alley hides armed thieves and dark secrets. Hordes of undead, raised by Vecna himself, huddle throughout portions of the city, filling the air with the constant stench of undeath.

Though Manshoon and Vecna maintain a facade of mutual trust and cooperation, they wage a cold war for control over their council of puppets, the sixteen Masked Lords of Waterdeep. The nobility and citizens of Waterdeep begrudgingly accept all this and have even become numb to the fascism, because life could always be worse: they could be forced out of Waterdeep and into the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS**.

The dragonward in the Tower of Ahghairon repelled Tiamat and her brood, protecting Waterdeep from all destruction... until Vecna arrived. The Walking Statues came to life to confront him, crushing build-

ings and citizens underfoot until Vecna learned the secrets to subjugate them. Now, the giants that stood still for centuries walk predictable laps around the city, protecting the Archlich from outside threats. But within those shaking buildings, the Zhentarim scheme to overthrow Vecna and take back their city. Are the Zhentarim’s careful machinations one secret Vecna has yet to learn?

It breaks my alarmingly still heart to see the fate that has befallen the City of Splendors.

- Volo

HISTORY

Waterdeep’s fall from grace was preceded by a few quiet but important moments. First, Manshoon outplayed his rival crime lords to seize the cache of dragons, a forgotten hoard of more than half a million gold pieces. No one is certain how many of the Masked Lords he paid off to support his rise to power, but it was enough.

Those who might resist him—influential figures like Mirt, Volo (before he died), and Laeral Silverhand—were so preoccupied with the Cult of the Dragon that they left a moral void in Waterdeep. The final blow was dealt when Manshoon confronted Vajra Safhar. With no allies to support her, Manshoon wrestled the *Blackstaff* away and Vajra fled the city. After that, no one was left to stop Manshoon from becoming the first and only Wizard-King of Waterdeep.

Manshoon watched armies and cities fall to Tiamat’s fury while Waterdeep remained safe behind *Ahghairon’s dragonward*. When Vecna emerged with the powers of a god, Manshoon surrendered (some say enthusiastically; others think reluctantly). For all the changes in Waterdeep, one thing never changes—the city is ruled by schemers.

GOVERNMENT

Vecna rules Waterdeep and sees the city as the seat of his power. In the rare moments of his absence, the city answers to Manshoon, the crowned Wizard-King of Waterdeep. Manshoon is one of the few beings who isn’t completely terrified of Vecna, thanks to the many clones and simulacrum of himself that he keeps. Just like the nobility and the Masked Lords who ruled before him, not even Vecna is certain when he’s dealing with the real Manshoon.

The Masked Lords pretend they still have power and influence, but in truth, they are just pieces in a chess game between Manshoon and Vecna. If one of them becomes too weak or too powerful, they are discarded and replaced. The corrupt nobles of Waterdeep would do anything to stay on (or join) the council of lords.

EVENTS OF WATERDEEP: DRAGON HEIST

The **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS** assumes the following events happened in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*:

- Manshoon looted the Vault of Dragons.
- The Doom Raiders were forced out of Waterdeep.
- The Cassalanter failed to save the souls of their children.
- Jarlaxle fled Waterdeep aboard his *Scarlet Marpenoth*.

CITIZENRY

Waterdeep remains cosmopolitan and diverse, but no one wants to stand out when the Zhentarim jails dissenters and Vecna throws them to hungry nothics. The divide between the nobility and the common citizens has only widened, and the city's wealth is reinvested into upscale wards in the form of magical defenses, while other sections are left to crumble.

During the initial days of Manshoon's rise to power, floods of citizens were driven from the city or had the displeasure of having sharp objects driven through them. Those who stayed believed they were beyond the danger, capable of buying safety or selling secrets to draw attention to others. When Vecna's shadow loomed over the city, everyone was quick to realize how little control they had, and fear gripped them all.

ECONOMY AND TRADE

Waterdeep's trade was once regulated by an alliance of guilds, but the only ones that continue to do business today have deep ties to the Zhentarim. Poison, drugs, and even smokepowder weaponry have become legitimate (and all three make it easier to control the populace). One of the hardest goods to come by is food, even as the population dwindles.

Waterdeep remains a supply hub, but now it only supports settlements in Vecna's Alliance. Most of the supplies travel by sea, making them prime targets for the Bregan D'aerthe. These routes reach as far as the dwarfholds and Luskan to the north, and beyond Warlock's Crypt to the south. The Waterdhavian guilds export stone shipments carved from Mount Waterdeep, trained Zhentarim mercenaries, and magical expertise in one shape or another. Vecna is a lord of secrets, but there are still a few brave smugglers who escape his one-eyed gaze and make a living by selling essentials at outrageous prices.

RELIGION

While Manshoon saw the temples of Waterdeep as a source of tribute and political information, Vecna brooks no rivals. He rewarded iconoclasts who destroyed religious artifacts and artisans who replaced altars with idols in his image, then placed the shrines under the constant surveillance of nothics of Vecna's creation, perched like fleshy gargoyles promising to report every little detail to their creator. Before long, all of Waterdeep's once-illustrious temples became unrecognizable and marred. Some temple keepers lost all faith when the connection to their gods were severed, but a furious and faithful few are ready to become holy warriors against Vecna. They give unanswered prayers in secret, and some even hope Vecna finds them so they can spit at his feet and die as martyrs.

NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

Despite the strict laws and tyranny that rule Waterdeep, much of the city's origins and magical history still imbue each and every stone. Here is some other noteworthy information for adventures that step into Waterdeep, the City of Splendor.

DRAGONWARD

An unbreakable spell known as *Ahghairon's dragonward* surrounds the entire city of Waterdeep, repelling all dragons from the city. This sole ward prevented Tiamat and her children from razing Waterdeep to the ground. However, there is rumored to be a lost staff—the *dragonstaff of Ahghairon*—which can allow dragons to utterly bypass the ward.

UNDERMOUNTAIN

The infamous multi-tiered dungeon said to contain untold riches once sat directly underneath Waterdeep. But when Undermountain's ruler Halaster Blackcloak found his apprentices turning on him, he took the entire complex and sequestered it within its own demiplane. All that remains now is an unfathomably deep vacuous chamber. The Undermountain's city of Skullport, a nest of villainy, somehow narrowly avoided mass teleportation.

WALKING STATUES

Once the city's last line of defense, the Walking Statues were a sight to behold. Towering constructs controlled by the Blackstaff, the eight statues were known as the God Catcher, Griffon, Sahuagin Humbled, Great Drunkard, Lady Dreaming, Honorable Knight, Hawk Man, and Swordmaiden. However, the statues are now under Vecna's control, and the marching sentinels cast the city in shadow.

WATERDEEP ADVENTURES

In the dark heart of the Sword Coast, Waterdeep is a double-edged sword of danger and adventurous opportunities. When the adventurers find themselves within the city's walls, they could encounter the following adventures:

Illegal-Illegal Market (Low Level). The Zhentarim have caught wind of arms dealers peddling weapons in Waterdeep. Bylva Bloodbuster (she/her, neutral evil dwarven **spy**) offers the adventurers a chance to assist the Zhentarim and flush out the illegal dealings. In truth, the illegal market is operated by Harper agents who plead with the heroes to assist their efforts to liberate Waterdeep.

Walking War-Statues (High Level). All of Waterdeep has grown accustomed to the ever-present stomping of the Walking Statues. However, history repeats itself as both the God Catcher and the Great Drunkard begin a rampage against the city. Do the citizens rise to stop the statues or use the chaos as an opportunity to overthrow Vecna?

MINOR LOCATIONS

Outside of the core cities that dominate the Sword Coast, countless other cities, settlements, and locations of note exist throughout the region. In the wake of recent cataclysms, some locations rose to utmost importance, whereas others were reduced to ruins and dust. This section outlines how lesser-known locations from the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide* have changed in this darkest timeline.

CANDLEKEEP

Equal parts library and fortress, Candlekeep was said to contain the vast collection of Faerûn's knowledge and the means to protect it. In the past, its many chambers, reading nooks, and corridors were rife with hushed activity. Now it's a ghastly husk of what it used to be. Vecna is said to be so fascinated with Candlekeep that he has a teleportation circle from his throne in Waterdeep directly into the deepest chambers of the library.

THE GREATEST OF LIBRARIES

No other location throughout all of Faerûn has a greater collection of written works. Candlekeep isn't just a repository of arcane knowledge, but more broadly, of all kinds of literature. The library meticulously catalogs poems, novels, diaries, and even the odd cookbook. Each tome and scroll has a home, and if any tome went missing, its absence would be discovered in time.

FORGOTTEN LORE

Beyond the rows of bookshelves or scroll racks, legendary lore of untold power resides in the vaults beneath Candlekeep. Vecna looted anything he found useful, and now he uses the vaults to store tomes that could be used against him. The deepest chambers of the vaults are for Vecna's eye alone, lined with traps or magical wards to ensure it stays that way.

WORLDBUILDING IN THE DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS

The Sword Coast is an expansive territory, so the locations detailed in this chapter aren't exhaustive. For any location not mentioned in this gazetteer, a Dungeon Master can consider the answers to these questions to determine what horrible (or unexpectedly happy) fate befell that place:

- What factions reside closest to this location?
- Does this location possess any resources of value?
- Is the location well defended against Tiamat or Vecna's forces?
- What cities or landscapes are in the surrounding area?
- Are there any legendary figures who would stay at that location?

LICH HAVEN

Candlekeep once flourished under an order called the Keeper of the Tomes. The morally flexible members of that order have remained and use necromantic manuals to pursue lichdom. Vecna has placed a trusted Keeper named Tome (she/her, lawful evil kenku **lich**) at the head of the order. Tome's ruthless nature guides her upkeep of Candlekeep's library; she pressed Candlekeep's many skilled sages into eternal service by forcibly raising them from the dead.

CANDLEKEEP ADVENTURE

Book Delivery Service (Low Level). Rip (he/him, chaotic neutral **kenku**) is having a bad day. The book courier's important order was stolen by imps from Helldoor's Gate, and now they're continuing to harass him for fun. The adventurers discover him wandering aimlessly, unsure of what to do without assistance. Should the heroes help him, they might find themselves entering the forbidden library of Vecna far sooner than most.

Despite the change in "leadership" at Candlekeep, I hear it still costs a tome to gain entry.

- Volo

CHULT

THIS ENTRY ASSUMES CERTAIN EVENTS FROM TOMB OF ANNIHILATION

Far beyond the realms of the Sword Coast, Chult remains a notable location thanks to its part in the downfall of all of Faerûn. Here, the heinous *Soulmonger* still sucks in the soul of every deceased mortal. Where in the past Chult boasted rich culture and wondrous wildlife, it's now a place of doom.

JUNGLES OF THE DEAD

From the northern tip to the southern coast, Chult holds not a living soul. All that moves is undead. From the Tomb of the Nine Gods, Acererak summoned masses of undead to roam outwards, consuming and crushing all in their path. Port Nyanzaru evacuated long before the undead reached their gates, having read the doomed writing on the walls, and its fleeing denizens sought refuge on nearby islands.

ACERERAK'S DOMAIN

The infamous archlich **Acererak** (he/him, neutral evil; stat block in *Tomb of Annihilation*) lives an unlife of decadence within the Tomb of the Nine Gods. Vecna handsomely rewarded him for his role in ushering in Vecna's return, gifting him all the souls, artifacts, and adventurers to toy with that he desired. For entertainment, Acererak forcibly resurrects defeated heroes, sending them through his torturous dungeons again and again.

HOME OF THE SOULMONGER

The *Soulmonger* was the catalyst for Vecna's return, an artifact that drained the resurrected and newly dead alike. It killed thousands merely by existing, and notable heroes and rich nobles who had undergone resurrection succumbed to the death curse. The artifact was intended to feed an atropal—a stillborn and undead god—but its unwilling sacrifice ushered in Vecna's return and the darkest era of the Sword Coast.

OPTIONAL RULE: ENDLESS SOULMONGERING

As the *Soulmonger* continues to drain all souls in Toril, it also has entirely drained the color from the surrounding island of Chult. Much of the island's shape remains the same, but the fabric of reality has started to shift because of the artifact. Non-Undead creatures who venture onto Chult must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw each day at dawn. Those who fail begin to turn monochrome and feel their soul weaken. If a creature fails three of these saving throws in a row, it gains a level of exhaustion that can only be removed by magical means. Finishing a long rest doesn't remove this exhaustion.

CHULT ADVENTURE

Acererak's Ever-Shifting Dungeon (High Level).

Time and time again, former adventurers have vanished as their notoriety increased—but a few leave behind clues that suggest Acererak kidnaps potential heroes, forcing them to run a gauntlet. By magical means, Mordenkainen contacts the party from within Acererak's ever-shifting dungeon. He asks for help to destroy the *Soulmonger* and save the lives of countless heroes.

DARKHOLD

A keep of mysterious black stone sits within the Sunset Mountains, protected by a standing army and wyvern riders. Though Darkhold was once a mere military stronghold, a modest city has sprung up around it. The Zhentarim accepts new recruits that have settled just outside the keep's walls, as long as those recruits are willing to do whatever it takes to be safe.

MILITARY-POLITAN

The city around Darkhold is an extension of its military might, and martial law is forced with iron fist and blade alike. Though it only welcomes those of the Zhentarim, as ranks swell, more people come to feed and entertain the recruits training to become professional soldiers.

UNITS OF WAR

In the past, the Zhentarim prided itself on the countless mercenaries, spies, or assassins in its employ. Under the Pereghost, Darkhold has prioritized developing units of war. The city proudly maintains a force of devastating heavy infantry and eerily accurate archers, along with a strike force of wyvern riders. All units are drilled endlessly, prepared in the event that they are called to war for or against Vecna. After all, the Zhentarim only has its own best interests in mind.

DARKHOLD ADVENTURE

Reaching the Reaching Wood (Low Level). None of the Zhentarim trainees have returned from drills in the nearby Reaching Woods. Sergeant Kulxad (she/her, lawful evil dragonborn **knight**) enlists the heroes to uncover and eliminate the threat. The adventurers discover the menace: the dragon Leafklin (they/them, lawful evil **young green dragon**), who was wounded by the drilling soldiers. Leafklin pleads to be safely returned to the Soaring Citadel and their mother Tiamat, but who will the adventurers side with?

DWARFHOLDS OF THE NORTH

Ill fates have befallen the seven dwarven citadels scattered across the Sword Coast. While many outsiders believe the dwarves have been eradicated, they underestimate dwarven resilience. The dwarves gather their resolve, buried deep in immovable stone.

As cataclysm swept the land, the dwarfholds were on the receiving end of dragon raids, demons surging from below, and the posturing of giants. Just after the Princes of Elemental Evil emerged, King Bruenor Battlehammer led an exodus to the Elemental Plane of Earth, where the dwarves could carve out a new home. Only a few stubborn dwarves stayed behind to protect their kingdoms and provide cover for their people's escape. So in truth, the dwarves' centuries-old fortresses were abandoned long before orcs, demons, and other foes could claim them.

After the dwarfholds were abandoned, Vecna used their considerable depth and connecting tunnels to his advantage, installing necrotic beacons that magically lure the demons of the Underdark closer.

The powerful enchantment charms the demons, making them docile while disintegrating any who venture too close to the beacons. All the beacons are placed to surround the Underdark, with the only free paths funneling the demons directly toward Helldoor's Gate and their devilish defenders.

CITADEL ADBAR

The fall of Citadel Adbar is a story of paranoia. City elders hired a doppelganger to impersonate the late King Harnoth and provide a false sense of stability, but agents of Vecna exposed this secret and chaos broke out. When the orcs of Many-Arrows besieged the citadel, it crumbled within months (hasty by dwarven standards). Vecna's agents plundered anything of value, and now the orcs call Adbar home.

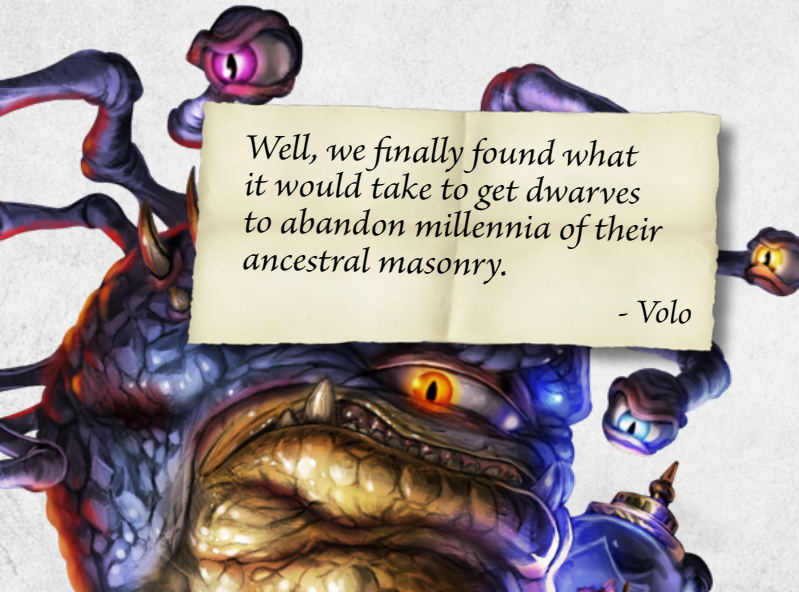
CITADEL FELBARR

When the orcish clans took Adbar, King Parson Glaive knew his citadel was next. He made the difficult choice to abandon Felbarr and flee to the Elemental Plane of Earth, and a few enterprising orcs snuck away from Adbar to take this citadel. Time will tell if this is the first seed of infighting amongst the Many-Arrows.

GAUNTLGRYM

THIS ENTRY ASSUMES CERTAIN EVENTS FROM STORM KING'S THUNDER

After the fire giant Duke Zalto kidnapped the fire primordial that powered Gauntlgrym's great forge, King Bruenor received a vision of the downfall of his kingdom—but he also saw a pathway to the Elemental Plane of Earth, where dwarfkind could hide away from a doomed world. Zalto sent his fire giants to claim Gauntlgrym as his own, stripping its mines of their last resources before he moved in. From within his new fortress, Zalto harnessed the primordial fire of Maegera the Dawn Titan to create a superweapon with aspirations of world domination. Unfortunately, the constant tide of dragons have kept Zalto preoccupied.



Well, we finally found what it would take to get dwarves to abandon millennia of their ancestral masonry.

- Volo

IRONMASTER

Nestled within a westerly point of Icewind Dale, the city of Ironmaster was the only dwarven settlement that refused to evacuate the Material Plane. Ironmaster has managed to survive by avoiding the attention of all foes. The front gates of the city have been shut for so long that they've frozen over, buried under countless feet of snow. The dwarves here fish icy waters and gather deep cavern mushrooms, shut off from the world.

MITHRAL HALL

Of all the dwarfholds in the Sword Coast, Mithral Hall suffered most. When Tiamat returned, she decreed that the dragon Shimmergloom be raised as a dracolich. The sinister shadow dragon who once ruled this dwarfhold for centuries spared no one as he sought revenge for his own death. Soon the Cult of the Dragon arrived to tend to Shimmergloom's reclaimed citadel, but they were surprised when their new master abandoned them, choosing to reside in Garumn's Gorge instead. There, the dracolich ponders his own death at the place where it happened. Shimmergloom knows a battle against Vecna's forces awaits him in the Plane of Shadows, but as an undead dragon, he wonders what part he has to play.

SUNDABAR

Sundabar's alliance with the Underdark was its undoing. The city's web of tunnels made it easy for the summoned demon lords to invade. In a fit of purposeless, malicious glee, Vecna used his magic to collapse the city deeper underground, cutting it off from the surface world. With nowhere to flee, the dwarves fought valiantly and died. All that remains of Sundabar are the tips of a few spires, protruding from the ground.

THORNHOLD

The Stoneshaft Clan, who called Thornhold their home, were the first to accept King Bruenor Battlehammer's plea to leave behind the Material Plane. In a matter of days the entire city was abandoned, leaving little trace of there ever being life there. Now the citadel is home to a tribe of bullywugs, who are empowered by the demonic blood of Juiblex. In a further curious turn of events, the infamous **Xanathar** (they/them, lawful evil beholder; stat block in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*) lurks within the deepest chambers, living in fear that Vecna himself might come storming in to slay them. To further Xanathar's torment, their beloved pet Sylgar has been taken from them, and the paranoid beholder views everyone as a potential fishnapper.

LUSKAN

Before Vecna's arrival, the outlaw's haven of Luskan had only just started to receive legal recognition as a city, thanks to Jarlaxle Baenre and the Bregan D'aerthe. But Vecna desired the magical secrets in the Arcane Brotherhood's Host Tower, and whatever a being of that power wants, they get. Jarlaxle fled the city long before Vecna's forces arrived, taking to the Sea of Swords to gather supplies and allies. In the meantime, Vecna's claim on Luskan goes unchallenged, and his diabolical research goes unchecked.

PIRACY NO MORE

Luskan's days of piracy and lawlessness were swiftly quelled as Vecna instated his twisted laws. All the High Captains who failed to flee were executed, their vessels commandeered to make deliveries across the Sword Coast to Vecna's controlled settlements. In a turn of irony, those ships have become targets of the pirates of the Bregan D'aerthe who once called this place home.

HOST TOWER OF THE ARCANE

A curious sight in a city built on piracy, the tree-like Host Tower of the Arcane was once a magical academy for the Arcane Brotherhood, led by Arklem Greeth, a lich. As the Arcane Brotherhood has long been known for allowing their members to pursue dangerous or evil knowledge, it should come as no surprise that the entire faction joined Vecna's Alliance. Now, they use the numerous Netherese artifacts to further research and placate Vecna.

ARTIFICIAL WOMB

Deep in the bowels of the Host Tower, the powerful magi loyal to Vecna have developed artificial life-forms. They live accelerated lives in service to Vecna from birth until death—and beyond. The Arcane Brotherhood can create mortals of any race, released from vats with false memories of a fulfilling life.

LUSKAN ADVENTURE

Jarlaxle Remembers (Low Level). Jarlaxle searches for mercenaries willing to work for the Bregan D'aerthe. He offers the adventurers a chance to prove themselves by sending an unsigned letter that directs them to set fire to the docks of Luskan. He wants to send a message to Vecna that he still holds a grudge, and igniting the docks will cause a temporary annoyance. Once the deed is done, Jarlaxle rescues the heroes using his submarine, taking them directly to Qu'madosfan Delmah to be rewarded.

SILVERYMOON

The "Gem of the North" was once a tranquil community of peace, celebration, and free exchange of knowledge. Now mind flayers have taken it over and all the denizens wander the streets with vacant stares. Illithid-style structures loom overhead, warping the once-natural beauty of Silvermoon. The knowledge in its libraries that once aided all those of good and pure heart now serves much more sinister causes.

ILLITHID COLONY

Silvermoon is now home to the largest population of mind flayers in the Sword Coast. In exchange for ensuring the safety of the Underdark city of Oryndoll, Vecna demanded the allegiance of an ulitharid known as Cephalosk. As long as Cephalosk follows Vecna's bidding, the God-King permits the Creedmaster to continue pursuing knowledge and communing with Illsensine, the patron deity of mind flayers.

MYTHAL

The city of Silvermoon is protected by a wondrous *mythal*, a field of magical force that prevents all sorts of spellcasting, from teleportation to conjuration. The mystical Moonbridge that leads to the city ceases to exist when foes try to step on it, and only the *mythal* kept Vecna's initial forces away... leading him to solicit the mind flayers for aid. Cephalosk longs to weaponize the *mythal*, the last piece of hope that lucid residents of Silvermoon cling to.

THARIZDUN'S PRISON

One of the most notable and recent additions to Silvermoon is the essence of the incapacitated deity, Tharizdun. Only Cephalosk and his master Vecna know that obscured within the *mythal* is an unbreakable arcane prison that binds the Elder Elemental Eye.

SILVERYMOON ADVENTURE

Mind Your Manners (High Level). The illithid known as Nestress (they/them, neutral **mind flayer**) hears Tharizdun's whispering in their mind. Slowly, they've started to gather a collection of thralls, sinking them into false comas to smuggle them into Silvermoon. Nestress sends a swarm of cranium rats to seek out the party and launch a revolution that could free Tharizdun.



VECNA'S SANCTUM IS ALSO
LOCATED IN SILVERMOON

SWORD COAST ISLES

Across the Sea of Swords, on the fringes of the Trackless Sea, dozens of isles remain undisturbed by the chaos of the mainland. Thanks to Jarlaxle Baenre and his fleet of ships flying the Bregan D'aerthe banner, many of these island nations have united or lent their aid to Jarlaxle's rebellion. But it's only a matter of time before Tiamat and Vecna resolve their war over the Sword Coast and the winner turns their attention to these stragglers.

GUNDARLUN

The island of Gundarlun has been disrupted by the climate change brought to Icewind Dale by Auril the Frostmaiden. The Gunds are skilled fisherfolk and merchants, whose aid for Bregan D'aerthe comes in both financial and military forms. When Jarlaxle is bored and needs to be reminded why he fights, he visits the sprawling port city of Gundbarg, wanders its markets, and trades imported rarities for the colorful garb these people wear.

LANTAN

North of Chult lies Lantan, settled by a deeply secretive and technologically advanced band of rock gnomes and humans. Much of their settlement escapes Vecna's prying eye because they've built downward, beneath the waves. The creators of smokepowder and of Jarlaxle's infamous submarine have thrown their weight behind the pirate captain. Given enough time and supplies, the creations of Lantan could level all of the Sword Coast, perfect for a fresh start.

MOONSHAE ISLES

The largest cluster of islands is known as the Moonshae Isles. Though its nations were formerly divided by tension and conflict, when chaos and destruction rained across the Sword Coast, the Moonshae Isles reached a collective peace, forming the Moonshae Accord. Since uniting, the Moonshae Accord has connected the closer islands via bridges and begun forming military force to defend against potential undead or dragon invasion. Some say this Moonshae Accord happened naturally, but in truth, Jarlaxle's mastery of politics and negotiations paved the way. After all, who benefits from a united Moonshae Isle more than Jarlaxle?

I often found myself horribly seasick, but I guess that isn't much of a problem anymore.

- Volo

OPTIONAL RULE: THE LIVING SEAS

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, the water elemental Olhydra might make life in the Sea of Swords more difficult. The Princess of Evil Water could demand a suitable sacrifice or tribute before any voyage begins. She may desire a living sacrifice or treasure, but the waves are perpetually fickle. Alternatively, the party's navigator might need to make an appropriate skill check to overcome the elemental minions and break away from Olhydra's domain.

RUATHYM

Located between Gundarlun and the Moonshae Isles is the island of Ruathym. When their vindictive king passed away, his son Nor Dorrng turned his own fury against all those who would threaten the Ruathen's nomadic way of life. His first decree was that the Bregan D'aerthe were barred from treading foot on Ruathym. Their ships were to be sunk on sight and all missives burned, and some believe Nor Dorrng might've Vecna's hand in his pocket.

GIANT STRONGHOLDS

THIS ENTRY ASSUMES CERTAIN EVENTS FROM STORM KING'S THUNDER

Scattered across the land are the remnants of fortresses claimed by the giants. Once, they followed a strict social structure known as the ordning, but they ran amok when their god shattered it (or so they say). Now each race of giants vies for supremacy.

DEADSTONE CLEFT

From within their once-open canyon, the stone giants sealed themselves away from the outside world. Their leader Kayalithica renewed her faith in their holy titan of myth, Skoraesus Stonebones. As the stone giants delved deeper underground, leaving their tiered caverns behind, they grew dangerously close to extinction. But Kayalithica claimed a divine revelation regarding a sleeping creature that might protect them. Eventually stone giants uncovered the dormant creature: a tarrasque. Now the stone giants simply bide their time, prepared to unleash the tarrasque whenever it best suits them.

GRUDD HAUG

Once the modest steading of the hill giants, Grudd Haug has grown monolithic in size, and their Chief Guh has a size to match. Not content to be mere hills, she has declared that her people are now mountain giants. Her people say she has grown so big, she is a goddess now, with clerical powers and a place in the giants' pantheon. It may sound silly, but their battle with the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye is no laughing matter, and they are the only thing keeping the Black Earth from expanding northward.

IRONSLAG

An ancestral adamantine forge in the heart of Mount Hamarhaast, Ironslag returned to its former glory when fire giant Duke Zalto imprisoned Maegera the Dawn Titan and reforged a colossal construct designed to slay dragons. The fire giants were strangely delighted by Tiamat's return and the chance to put their war machine Vonindod to work again. To date, the war remains a stalemate.

LYN ARMAAL

The cloud giants quickly discovered the skies were no longer safe enough for their flying castles. Rather than belittling themselves by landing, Lyn Armaal opted to rise even higher beyond the clouds, to the very cusp of where the skies meet the stars. Countess Sansuri still leads them, but many cloud giants have removed themselves from the Ordning entirely. They've adapted to an entirely isolationist lifestyle, in hopes they can simply wait out the downfall of Faerûn.

SVARDBORG

The Sea of Moving Ice has frozen over, and boats are now obsolete in this land where frost giants' hunting lodges expand out into a sprawling city. Their leader Jarl Storvald struck an alliance with Auril the Frostmaiden, in hopes that with enough faithful followers, she can bring about the Age of Everlasting Ice and cement the giants' standing following the ordning.

MAELSTROM

The cause of King Hekaton's disappearance (and presumed death) was never discovered, and his daughter Serissa's reign was painfully brief. The conniving blue dragon Iymrith sparked a civil war that forced Serissa to flee the Maelstrom with the *Ruling Scepter*, allowing Iymrith to claim the *Wyrmskull Throne* as her own. The throne was useless to her without the scepter, so she grew tired of the fortress and abandoned it like those before her. Little dwells in the half-flooded, battle-marred Maelstrom now, but there are rumors that an undead aboleth called the Krakolich calls it home. Without their ancestral home of the Maelstrom, countless storm giants have accepted that they are now on the lowest rung of the ordning.

UNDERDARK

THIS ENTRY ASSUMES CERTAIN EVENTS FROM OUT OF THE ABYSS

Beneath all of Faerûn lies the Underdark, an endless network of tunnels and caves. It once held civilizations as mighty as any on the surface—drow, duergar, svirfneblin, and even illithids. That is no longer the case. Those tunnel roads have been torn through by rampaging demons, and any attempts to map the Underdark must begin anew. This land was always hostile to surface-dwellers, but now it's not even safe to its native people.

DEMONIC DOMAIN

No one knows what happened to Gromph Baenre, the drow archmage of Menzoberranzan who summoned forth all the demon lords into the Underdark. The demon lords fight ceaselessly among themselves in an attempt to deem themselves ruler, with some turning their aspirations to the World Above. Unfortunately, as part of Vecna's endless preparations, he has installed necrotic beacons throughout his claimed dwarven cities that incapacitate demons. It seems their only route of escape lies through Helldoor's Gate.

BLOOD WARFRONT

The ceaseless Blood War only endangers the world when it spills out of the devils' Nine Hells or the demons' Abyss. Unfortunately, here in the Underdark, it has. The fallen angel Zariel's whole existence has been to thwart the demonic incursions, and the skies above Helldoor's Gate are tainted with demonic ichor and blood rain. The Underdark has become a sinkhole for the trash of Helldoor's Gate.

LAST BASTIONS OF CIVILIZATION

Nearly every settlement fell to the overwhelming demon waves, but a few cunning cities survive. The illithid City of Loretakers, Oryndoll, holds off demons with psionic mastery (and it's rumored Vecna lent his hand to ensure the city's untold knowledge isn't destroyed.) Meanwhile, the drow confederation of Undrek'Thoz and the duergar bastion of Gracklstugh have formed an alliance of assassins and earthworks. Both have dug deep, creating numerous funnels to stem the demons. The drow and duergar aren't suited to the surface world, and they won't go down without a fight.

During what little time I spent in the Underdark, I complained ceaselessly about how needlessly large it was—but now, the sheer scale seems to be to the Sword Coast's benefit.

- Volo

Now that I'm dead, moving to Warlock's Crypt is surprisingly appealing.

- Volo

WARLOCK'S CRYPT

The legend of Warlock's Crypt—a flying city that crashed into the Troll Hills—seemed ridiculous. How could there be a city of well-behaved undead and necromancers that didn't eat itself alive? Still, any who ventured close to its supposed location returned with tales of undead hordes and skeletal bats that harassed them at every turn.

When Vecna emerged, he confirmed the legends were true and raised this center of necromancy out of its grave and back into the sky where it belonged. Interconnected wizards' towers, small and large, float in the sky in concentric rings, connected by walls and magical bridges. Beneath the towers, lesser undead call the derelict structures in the Troll Hills home, waiting to be summoned skyward by their undead overlords.

RISEN FROM THE CRYPT

Once, the Netherese Empire propelled entire metropolises into flight with mythallars, powerful globes that harnessed raw magic. To keep the fallen city out of demons' clutches and to demonstrate the depths of his secret knowledge, Vecna reforged the city's mythallar. Although it can move, Warlock's Crypt hovers above the Troll Hills where it originally fell.

UNDEAD HAVEN

Over sixty powerful lichs, vampire lords, and ghosts call Warlock's Crypt home. Before the Sword Coast fell, they banded together to create a haven for like-minded individuals who wished to master magic. They did indeed master it, to Tiamat's surprise. When she sent her loyal dragon subjects to destroy the Crypt, they weren't merely slain, but reanimated as zombie dragons. Now the great wyrms think twice before approaching, lest they wind up meeting the same fate as the city's newest defenders.

LARLOCH, THE SHADOW KING

The current ruler of Warlock's Crypt is Larloch, a lich of exceptional intelligence. He once had the foresight to plan for nearly every possible encounter, but the effects of his extreme age have dulled his wits somewhat. He desires nothing more than to be left alone, but occasionally finds enjoyment in conversing with those who dare to approach him. Those who can't provide services or entertainment are simply killed and reborn as mindless servants.

WARLOCK'S CRYPT ADVENTURE

Larloch's Contingency (Epic Level). In a moment of absolute lucidity, Larloch formulates a way to escape Vecna's clutches: he'll put Warlock's Crypt on a collision course with Waterdeep. All the heroes have to do is convince allies to follow up by assaulting Waterdeep and striking down Vecna. There may never be another chance like this.

ZUGGTMYCOS

Zuggtmycos is a forest of fungus, where thick spore clouds hover like a dense fog and every surface exudes ooze. The myconids here are hungry for outsiders, longing to nourish themselves on something new. In fact, the entire forest is a single demonic living entity that sees everything that happens within it. It uses gas spores, aggressive offspring, and orbs of mold and ooze to lure prey to the places that'll help it grow fastest.

A DEMONIC UNION

Zuggtmycos came into existence when Zyggtmoy, the Demon Queen of Fungi, approached a massive sentient fungal growth called Araumycos to enthrall them. Once two fungal entities merged, they spread from the upper reaches of the Underdark toward the surface world.

THE FUNGAL FOREST

Slowly growing their way toward the surface, Zuggtmycos began corrupting what was once the High Forest. All trees rotted from the inside, gradually replaced by crude fungal mimics. Much of the terrain is now carpeted with yellow mold, eager to engulf the unsuspecting or foolish.

BLOOD OF JUIBLEX

Directly under Zuggtmycos, where it touches the highest layers of the Underdark, exists a roaming acidic lake of slime. Here, the demon lord of oozes disrupted the union between Zyggtmoy and Araumycos. Though it could not stop them entirely, its spawn, a living lake of acid, eats away at Zuggtmycos's roots—because only one demon lord can engulf the whole world.

ZUGGTMYCOS ADVENTURE

Not Mushroom to Grow (Mid Level). The cultists of the Elder Elemental Eye grow increasingly alarmed at the encroaching fungal infection and its dark, mind-altering properties. They'll pay mercenaries to cut through the demonic myconids and keep them from regenerating. The cult speculates that the myconid's sudden change in temperament has something to do with the blood of Juiblex that keeps this place perpetually moist.

CHAPTER 4

CAMPAIGN HOOKS

THE STAGE IS SET AND THE ACTORS ARE IN POSITION, BUT WHAT DO THEY PERFORM? THE DOOMED SWORD COAST IS A LAND RIFE WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENTURE, DEPENDING ON WHOM (IF ANYONE) THE ADVENTURERS DECLARE ALLEGIANCE TO. THEY MIGHT PROTECT IMPORTANT FIGURES, DELIVER POWERFUL ARTIFACTS, ASSASSINATE ENEMY LEADERS, OR ENSURE ONE FACTION THRIVES AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER.



THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES ADVENTURE HOOKS ranging from individual missions to full campaigns set in the Doomed Sword Coast. What are the aims of the adventuring party? Do they seek

to restore order and balance to a broken land? Or do they perhaps embrace evil? If things are doomed anyway, surely they can't make it much worse...

RESTORING ORDER AND BALANCE

In this timeline above all others, the Sword Coast desperately needs heroes and embodiments of justice. They are few and far between, but if a group were willing to put their lives on the line, they would stoke the flames of hope all throughout the region. This noble outlook will be an uphill battle, with numerous setbacks against seemingly insurmountable odds. Yet, if there is even the smallest chance of success, isn't it worth trying?

EMBRACING EVIL

Alternatively, in a world where most have their own best interests in mind, why shouldn't the adventurers also reap the benefits of a shattered land? In a world where good deeds go punished more often than not, it certainly pays to be evil. Perhaps the adventuring party are free agents roaming the lands to find the most profitable allegiances. Maybe they act as double agents to reap twice the benefits. It's a delicate balance, though, as aligning yourself with evil is almost guaranteed to end in betrayal and a knife in your back.

LEVELS 1-4: LOCAL HEROES

These hooks for characters of 1st to 4th level allow the adventuring party to acclimate to the Doomed Sword Coast, making allies and enemies alike.

If good has even a slim chance of prevailing, then that hope lies with the Harpers.

- Volo

RESISTING THE HARPERS

The Harpers, once an organization dedicated to promoting good and upholding balance across the Sword Coast, crumbled when confronted with insurmountable opposition. But it wasn't the constant espionage from the Zhentarim or the ceaseless assaults of dragons that did them in—it was Vecna's masterful manipulation that destroyed them. All notable members are believed to be dead or in hiding.

Before Waterdeep fell, the "Old Mage" Elminster Aumar and Mirt the Moneylender fled to the far corners of Faerûn. But the world needs its heroes now more than ever, and Elminster and Mirt return to start the slow and careful reforming of the Harpers. If the adventuring party are figures of good, then the remnants of the Harpers contact them with quests. The requests start small: message deliveries, assisting small settlements, or confronting mild dangers. Regardless of how small the request, each act of good bolsters the Harpers in their quest against the prevalent evil in the land.

REKINDLE THE FAITH

By his twisted magic, Vecna deceived all of Faerûn into believing their gods have abandoned them, driving multitudes to faithlessness. But the gods of the Forgotten Realms still have faith in their followers. Although Vecna has silenced them, a few of their whispers still slip through his profane spell to the ears of chosen champions. Perhaps with enough temples, shrines, and adherents, one or more of those deities can restore their strength and confront the Undying King.

SHARPENED ACROSS THE SEA OF SWORDS

Budding adventurers turn to the Sea of Swords to test their strength and bolster their riches. Adventurers might have to smooth over negotiations in the Moonshae Isles, clash with the nomadic seafarers of Gundarlun, or test experimental devices in the technological haven of Lantan. And if you sail an independent vessel, it's only a matter of time before you encounter the fleet under the Bregan D'aerthe banner. Jarlaxle needs help documenting safe islands, reclaiming supplies from wreckages, and sneaking back onto the Sword Coast.

LEVELS 5–10: HEROES OF THE REALM

The following hooks are for characters of 5th to 10th level, as the adventurers master their talents and meddle in matters far beyond what most would dare.

INTO HALASTER'S DOMAIN

Halaster Blackcloak is no fool: he lacks the power to confront Vecna, and transporting the Undermountain into its own demiplane gives him time to gather it. He needs minions—capable ones. Most continue to disappoint Halaster, dying early in the uppermost layers of the Undermountain. Through obsessive scrying magic, Halaster observes every individual or group who shows potential in the Doomed Sword Coast—and the adventurers catch his eye.

Halaster teleports the unwilling party to some part of the Undermountain. A Dungeon Master can even use this adventure hook to kick off the campaign as Halaster grabs strangers and dumps them into this deathtrap to test their teamwork. Within the dungeon, the adventurers can hone their skills and perhaps claim its magic treasure. Upon surviving, the party is dumped unceremoniously back into the world, at least until Halaster summons them back. Halaster eventually reveals himself to the party, offering them the opportunity to join him. His ultimate goal? Usurp Manshoon, take back Waterdeep, and oust Vecna.

SUNSET MOUNTAINS OF BLOODSHED

The Zhentarim prepare for war from their bastion of Darkhold, nestled between the two peaks of the Sunset Mountains. Gnoll raiders gather in alarming numbers, attacking supply caravans and pushing

west. The Zhentarim believe the gnolls may be drawn by their demonic blood toward Helldoor's Gate and the front lines of the Blood War. That might not be the Zhentarim's problem, but better safe than sorry. They're hiring anyone bold enough, even unproven adventurers, to beat back the innumerable hordes.

The Zhentarim task the party with gathering intelligence about whether the gnolls will assault Darkhold. Soon, the adventurers must help defend Darkhold against the mass of gnolls, hopefully turning the tide so the Zhentarim can live to steal another day.

OUR EARTHY HOME

Some dwarves who didn't flee to the Elemental Plane of Earth with King Bruenor Battlehammer now regret their stubbornness, as whispers from beyond the Material Plane report news of the successful migration. The king's success is confirmed when Bruenor uses magical messages and a few planeswalking envoys to contact the party. Despite having a home beyond the Material Plane, King Bruenor has every intention to return to the Forgotten Realms and rid it of its evils. He needs to recover dwarven artifacts to empower his forces and establish safehouses in the Forgotten Realms to gather intelligence without risking his people revealing themselves.

Once settled, Battlehammer seeks an audience with Entemoch, the Prince of Earth Elementals. Unlike his brother Ogmoch, who aligned himself with the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye, Entemoch only has concerns for the safety of the Elemental Plane. If Entemoch is convinced to align with the dwarves, perhaps the forces of Elemental Good may be swayed to aid in the battle against evil.



LEVELS 11–16: MASTERS OF THE REALM

These adventure hooks are for characters of 11th to 16th level, as the adventuring party's choices and actions shape the very fate of the Doomed Sword Coast.

A WORLD OF ICE THAT NEVER MELTS

Auril captured Icewind Dale in a perpetual winter, and with the devotion of the frost giant Jarl Storvald, now seeks to seize the *Ring of Winter* and coil the entire world in ice. The ringbearer, Artus Cimber, went to sea with Jarlaxle and Bregan D'aerthe. However, years of being the Chosen of Auril and living in an evil world have corrupted him. Artus Cimber is heading back to Icewind Dale to deliver the ring to Auril himself.

All the factions know that the *Ring of Winter* is out there and hope to get their clutches on it first. Zariel could freeze over all of the Underdark, Tiamat could add it to her treasure hoard, and Vecna wants to hide away any object that could interrupt his reign. Will the adventurers prevent the Ring of Winter from falling into the wrong hands? Or is encasing the world in ice the only way to stop Vecna from doing any more damage?

A LONG OVERDUE HEIST

Candlekeep is Vecna's personal vault. The top layers are filled with tomes of untold knowledge, whereas the depths below contain artifacts of unparalleled power. Much of the Doomed Sword Coast is starved of powerful items because what isn't stored away by Vecna is thrown into Tiamat's vast treasure hoard. If the adventuring party desires to wield powerful items, the simplest solution is to steal them.

Breaking into Candlekeep means finding a way around magical wards, a flock of kenku servants, a roster of studious liches, and the inscrutable kenku lich Tome, Keeper of Tomes. The heroes find they aren't alone, however, because certain characters—like Jarlaxle Baenre—delight in carrying out heists at Vecna's expense. The adventurers' plan needs to be foolproof, because they've only got one chance. They better not miss.

When I was still alive, there were tales of a heist in Waterdeep. Merely rumors though, I never personally saw any heists take place.

- Volo

THE STRAW THAT BROKE WATERDEEP

Waterdeep remains safe from the broods of dragons thanks to *Ahghairon's dragonward*, but those defenses can be disabled with the *dragonstaff of Ahghairon*. As long as the staff is out there in the world, Vecna envisions Tiamat's five heads tearing him apart. Tiamat imagines this, too.

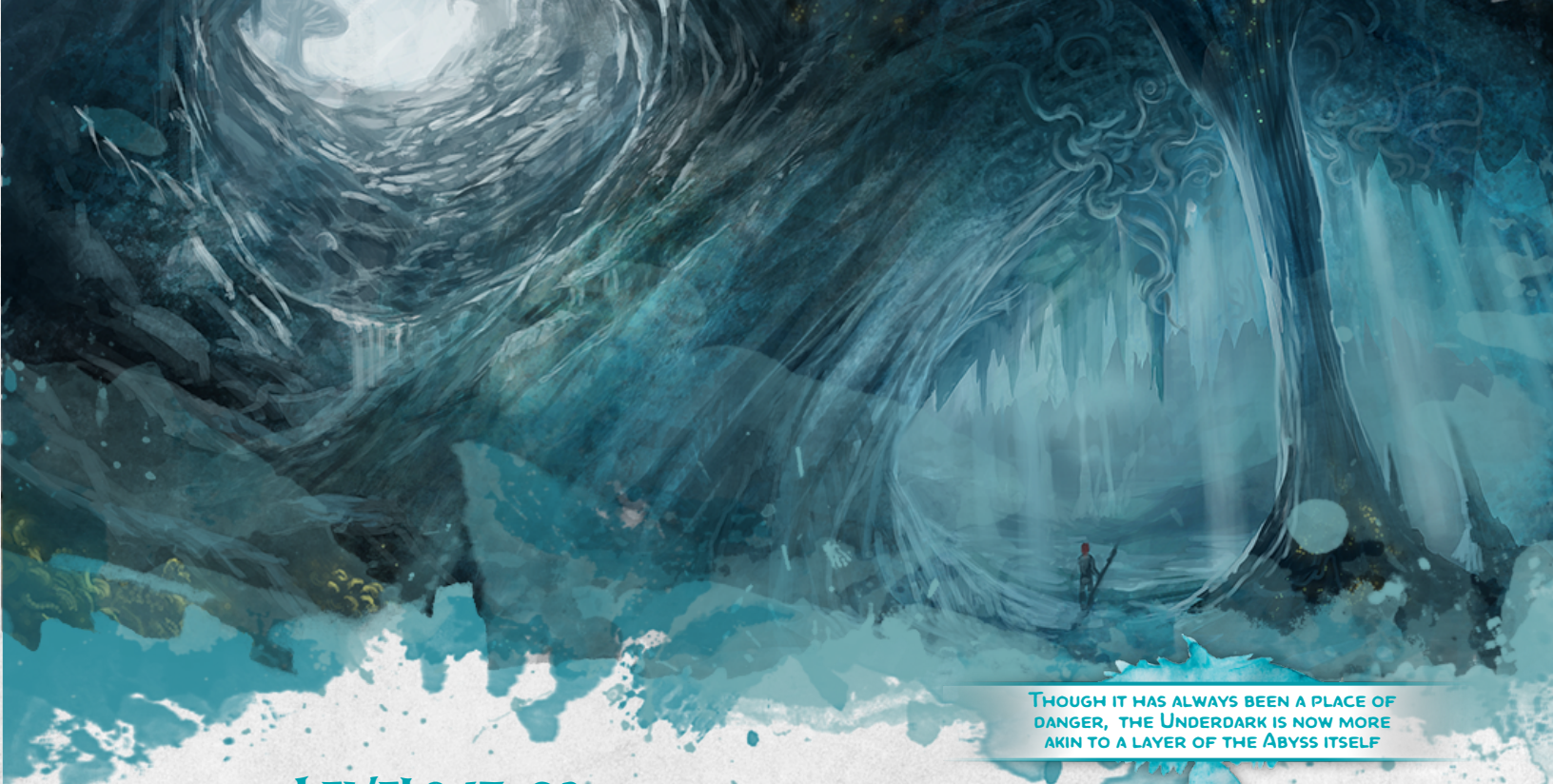
So where is the staff? Magically split into three parts by Elminster Aumar before fleeing Waterdeep. Elminster holds one part; the second was hidden in Ahghairon's Statue in Waterdeep; and the final piece was exiled to the Astral Sea. Once they reassemble one of the artifacts the warring empires desire most, can the adventurers play powerbroker and come out alive?

Last I recall, the dragonstaff of Ahghairon was held by an actual dragon. Aurinax was their name, delightful chap.

- Volo



CANDLEKEEP IS NOW OVERRUN
WITH ALL MANNER OF UNDEAD



THOUGH IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE OF DANGER, THE UNDERDARK IS NOW MORE AKIN TO A LAYER OF THE ABYSS ITSELF

LEVELS 17–20: MASTERS OF THE WORLD

Once the characters reach 17th to 20th level, they've become the stuff of legend, and if they can't repair the wounds of the Sword Coast, nobody can.

FROM WHENCE THEY CAME

Vecna has lined the border between the Underdark and the surface world with necrotic towers that draw demons to them like moths to a flame. And like those moths, the demons are burned away when they reach those towers. Smarter demons evade them and try to break the bottleneck of Helldoor's Gate, where the devil army's general, Zariel, beats them back.

But it would be foolish to mistake this problem for solved. The only way to stop the demons' chaos in the Underdark from spilling over is to close the portals to the Abyss that Gromph Baenre opened. Though likely a suicide mission, if the adventurers could slay enough demon princes to put the hordes into disarray, they could get close enough to close the portals. Certainly Zariel would return to her layer of hell, Avernus, if the onslaught of demons abated.

DARKNESS UPON SHADOWFELL

Vecna's first step toward conquering other planes begins with his skirmishes into the Shadowfell. He needs not take over the whole Plane of Shadow, though; he only wants to hold its Fortress of Memories, from within it flow all memories taken from deceased mortals and deities alike. With this fortress, there is no telling what knowledge he'd gain to bolster his omnipotent might.

A brood of shadow dragons, most notably the shadow dracolich Shimmergloom, have temporarily aligned themselves with the Raven Queen. The Raven Queen herself works in mysterious ways, but perhaps she contacts the adventuring party to employ their assistance. This gives the party an opportunity to decide to aid Vecna or Tiamat, or to aid neither and help the Raven Queen preserve Shadowfell as it is.

UNLEASH THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE

The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye is a fickle ally, but few factions have both its burning hatred of Vecna and raw firepower. The cultists have been the victim of his deceit and flitter between instant fiery rage and stony patience. If their deity Tharizdun is released from his *mythal* prison within Silverymoon, all their elemental fury will be brought down on Vecna.

Only Vecna and the mind flayer Creedmaster Cephalosk know of Tharizdun's location; however, cultists of the Elder Elemental Eye receive visions that allude to Silverymoon. If an adventuring party grows close to the cult, they might suffer from these visions themselves. Silverymoon is now a hive for illithids and their mindless minions, rife with psionic dangers. Does Tharizdun have the power to defeat Vecna? Maybe, but the uncontrollable destruction he can unleash will certainly keep the Whispered One's attention. In addition, shattering the *mythal* leaves Silverymoon vulnerable, where any organized army could march to reclaim the city as their own and deliver Vecna the sickly taste of defeat.

CHAPTER 5

CHARACTER OPTIONS

DESPITE EVERYTHING THE SWORD COAST HAS GONE THROUGH, POCKETS OF PEOPLE STILL ATTEMPT TO LEAD ORDINARY LIVES. LIFE IN AND AROUND THE CITIES HAS FUNDAMENTALLY SHIFTED, AND NEARLY EVERYONE STRUGGLES TO FIND THEIR PLACE. PERHAPS YOU WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE BORN INTO SUCH A PLACE, OR PERHAPS YOU FOUGHT TO MAKE ONE FOR YOURSELF.



WHEN CREATING A CHARACTER FOR THE Doomed Sword Coast, consider how the end of the world affected your character. Did they have a life before everything fell

to pieces? What sort of upbringing could they have had if raised in a land in evil's clutches? The answer to those questions can help shape your character: where they stand on the fate of the world, what drives them to adventuring, and what dark secrets they hold dear.

This chapter contains new character options, including five new subclasses, ten alternative background features, and a Heroic Chronicle to help flesh out the backstories of player characters and NPCs alike.

SUBCLASSES

This section contains five new subclasses, all based on the rich history of the Doomed Sword Coast. See the Subclass Options table for a quick overview of the subclass options available.

BARD: COLLEGE OF THE ELEMENTS

The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye would have everyone believe there is a perfect balance between air, earth, fire, and water. In truth, the four battle

endlessly, their very natures at odds with one another. A flame can't exist in a storm, much like the sea erodes all land. However, those who recognize this elemental nature and align themselves with it may find the very elements at the whims of their fingertips.

Bards who join the College of the Elements could be members of the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye or servants of other elemental forces. Much of the world has been disrupted, twisted, and left desolate. Members of College of the Elements view the misshapen world with a yearning to restore a balance—or a selfish desire to exploit the imbalance for their own gain.

COLLEGE OF THE ELEMENTS FEATURES

Bard Level	Features
3rd	Song of the Elements, Summon Elemental Ambassador
6th	Invoke Essence
14th	Primordial Unity

SONG OF THE ELEMENTS

3RD-LEVEL COLLEGE OF THE ELEMENTS FEATURE

You know harmonies that resonate with the elements. You can spend 1 minute channeling one of the elements, after which you gain one of the following effects of your choice:

Air. You can take the Dash action as a bonus action and you can levitate up to 5 feet off the ground. While levitating in this way, you can move up or down as part of your move. While you are not touching the ground, you can move only by pushing or pulling against a fixed object or surface within reach (such as a wall), which allows you to move as if you were climbing.

SUBCLASS OPTIONS

Class	Subclass	Description
Bard	College of the Elements	These weavers of song and dance incorporate the elements into their performances
Druid	Circle of the Nine	These corrupted druids reshape the world around them into a cruel hellscape
Fighter	Zhentilar's Finest	These warriors strike their enemies down with fear and blade in kind
Rogue	Spell Slayer	These assassins excel in disrupting magic and slaying spellcasters
Wizard	School of Secrets	These scholars twist the secrets of enemies into painful weapons

Earth. You have a +2 bonus to your AC.

Fire. You radiate dim light out to 30 feet. Any creature that hits you with a melee attack while within 5 feet of you takes fire damage equal to your bard level.

Water. You can breathe underwater and gain a swim speed equal to your walking speed. You can move through a space as narrow as 1 foot wide without squeezing.

The effect ends after 1 hour or if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a spell slot of any level to use it again.

SUMMON ELEMENTAL AMBASSADOR

3RD-LEVEL COLLEGE OF THE ELEMENTS FEATURE

You've learned how to conduct yourself in front of countless fickle elementals. You learn the *find familiar* spell and can cast it as a ritual. The spell counts as a bard spell for you, but it doesn't count against your number of spells known. When you cast the spell, instead of choosing a normal form for your familiar, choose one of the following special forms: **mud mephit**, **smoke mephit**, or **steam mephit**.

In addition, you gain proficiency in the Nature skill, and you learn to speak, read, and write Primordial or one other language of your choice.

INVOKE ESSENCE

6TH-LEVEL COLLEGE OF THE ELEMENTS FEATURE

You can bend your connection with the elements to deliver an explosive burst of primordial power. As an action, you can expend any number of your Bardic Inspiration dice to create one of the following effects:

Air. One Large or smaller creature you can see within 30 feet of you must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC or be launched into the air. On a failed saving throw, it rises vertically a number of feet in the air equal to $3 \times$ the total rolled on the Bardic Inspiration dice. While aloft, the target can move only by pushing or pulling against a fixed object or surface within reach (such as a wall or a ceiling), which allows it to move as if it were climbing. At the end of your next turn, the effect ends and the target falls back to the ground, taking fall damage as normal.

Earth. A creature you can see within 30 feet of you gains temporary hit points equal to the total rolled on the Bardic Inspiration dice. Until the target loses all these temporary hit points, it can ignore difficult terrain.

Fire. You create a 10-foot-high, 5-foot-wide, and 1-foot-thick pillar of flame on a solid surface within 5 feet of you. The pillar is opaque and lasts until the end of your next turn. When the pillar appears, any creature within its area must make a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, a creature takes fire damage equal to the total rolled on the Bardic Inspiration dice, or half as much damage on a successful save. A creature takes the same damage when it enters the pillar for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.

Water. One creature you can see within 30 feet of you gains temporary hit points equal to the total rolled on the Bardic Inspiration dice. For as long as the creature has those temporary hit points, it has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks and can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

PRIMORDIAL UNITY

14TH-LEVEL COLLEGE OF THE ELEMENTS FEATURE

You can forge a connection between elements, combining their boons. Whenever you use your Song of the Elements feature, you can gain a second elemental effect of your choice for the duration.



A BARD OF THE COLLEGE OF ELEMENTS
TAPPING INTO PRIMORDIAL FORCES

DRUID: CIRCLE OF THE NINE

Druids of the Circle of the Nine accept that fiends are a natural part not of the cycle of life, but of the cycle of death. Such druids see the hellscape the world has become, and they'll be damned (perhaps literally) if they don't sculpt the land to make it someone else's personal hell. In a world where nearly everyone is complicit in evil deeds, these druids terraform the world to punish everyone around them. Some may do this out of a belief it's the natural order of things—after all, even the Nine Hells are shaped to torment corrupt souls—while others simply mourn the world they lost and wish others to understand their pain.

CIRCLE OF THE NINE FEATURES

Druid Level	Features
2nd	Infernal Mentor, Hellscape Architect
6th	Freedom's Cost
10th	Emboldened Hellscape
14th	Fiendish Perfection

INFERNAL MENTOR

2ND-LEVEL CIRCLE OF THE NINE FEATURE

You gain an infernal contact within the Nine Hells. When you first gain this feature they are indifferent to you, but you may be able to curry favor with them in time. Once per day, you can cast the *sending* spell with no components, targeting this devil only.

In addition, you learn to speak, read, and write Infernal or one other language of your choice.

CHOOSING YOUR INFERNAL MENTOR

The Infernal Mentor's unusual subclass feature creates a connection with an NPC. When choosing the Circle of the Nine, work with your DM to develop your druid's relationship with their mentor. Here are some questions to consider with your DM:

- What type of devil is your mentor? An imp mentor would be vastly different compared to an archdevil.
- Where does the devil reside? Are they comfortable in the Nine Hells or battling within Helldoor's Gate?
- As you rise in power, your infernal mentor may similarly climb the ranks of devils. But what else does the devil expect from you in exchange for aiding you?

Your DM should also consider the following questions, though you and your character may be unaware of their answers:

- Does the devil have any ulterior motives the druid is unaware of?
- Does the devil approve of the druid's ambitions?
- How likely is the devil to assist the druid in their goals?

In the event that your mentor is slain (which only truly happens if they are killed within the Nine Hells), another devil will likely be promoted to take the devil's place.

HELLSCAPE ARCHITECT

2ND-LEVEL CIRCLE OF THE NINE FEATURE

You've seen truly hellish landscapes and can ensure everyone shares your vision (whether they like it or not). As a bonus action, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape feature to take on a fiendish form and manipulate the surrounding area to torment your enemies. You retain your game statistics, but horns of flame protrude from your forehead (if you don't have them already) and the area around you smells of brimstone. This form lasts for 10 minutes. You can revert to your normal form earlier by using a bonus action on your turn. You automatically revert if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die.

Whenever you assume this fiendish form, choose a hellscape that manifests around you, which grants you its benefits for the duration:

Festering Hellscape. Winds of salt blow into open wounds and your surroundings develop a coating of tarnish and rust. Immediately after you deal damage to a creature within 60 feet of you, you can use a bonus action to force that creature to make a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature's wounds fester and it takes necrotic damage equal to 1d8 + your Wisdom modifier at the start of each of its turns. Any creature can take an action to staunch the wound with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing. A creature can only have one festering wound at a time.

Tempting Hellscape. You present dark temptations of vice and desire to sway your foes. When you activate this form, and as a bonus action on your subsequent turns while it lasts, you can target one creature you can see within 60 feet of you and cause it to make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed saving throw, the target makes attacks with disadvantage on until the end of its next turn, provided you remain within its line of sight.

Grasping Hellscape. You conjure claws, vines, tentacles, or an unspeakable horror that grasps at its victims. When you activate this form, and as a bonus action on your subsequent turns while it lasts, you can target one creature you can see within 60 feet of you. The target must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or have its speed reduced to 0 until the end of your next turn, as pieces of the environment grasp the target. If a target fails the save by 5 or more, it is restrained for the duration.

FREEDOM'S COST

6TH-LEVEL CIRCLE OF THE NINE FEATURE

Your time among the devils has taught you much about making sinister deals. You can use an action to target one creature you can see that is currently affected by your Hellscape Architect feature and offer it a deal: its freedom for momentary servitude. The creature is forced to use its reaction to respond to the deal, either accepting or declining it.

If the creature accepts the deal, it becomes charmed by you. While charmed in this way, it obeys your reasonable commands, granting you favors it would offer to someone it was indebted to. This effect ends on a target after 1 hour, if you attack it, or if it witnesses you attacking or damaging any of its allies.

If the creature declines the deal, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

I preferred druids when they were glorified botanists.

- Volo

EMBOLDENED HELLSCAPE

10TH-LEVEL CIRCLE OF THE NINE FEATURE

The tormenting nature of your Hellscape Architect form improves. At the start of each of your turns while in your Hellscape Architect form, you can change which hellscape manifests around you (no action required). Additionally, the benefits of each form increase as follows:

Festering Hellscape. The damage dealt by your Festering Hellscape wounds increases from 1d8 to 2d8.

Tempting Hellscape. On a failed saving throw, the target has disadvantage on ability checks, in addition to attack rolls.

Grasping Hellscape. You can target two creatures instead of one.

FIENDISH PERFECTION

14TH-LEVEL CIRCLE OF THE NINE FEATURE

Your fiendish form has evolved gloriously beyond that of real devils. While in your Hellscape Architect form, fiendish wings sprout from your back, giving you a flying speed of 30 feet. You also gain advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.



LEFT TO RIGHT: A DRUID OF THE CIRCLE OF THE NINE, A ZHENTILAR'S FINEST, AND A SPELL SLAYER

FIGHTER: ZHENTILAR'S FINEST

All the Zhentarim who operate in Darkhold Keep under the Pereghost learn his tenets and battle mantras. Leaders of the Zhentarim know that it's not enough to simply best your enemy—you must strike fear into them and all those who stand beside them.

A fighter trained by Zhentarim's Finest believes in one thing: might over matter. Battle is won by those of iron will and lost by those who crumble from the pressure. Even those warriors who've turned their back on the Zhentarim still fight with their techniques, because despite what you feel about the faction, you can't argue with their results.

ZHENTILAR'S FINEST FEATURES

Fighter Level	Features
3rd	Instill Fear
7th	Intimidation Tactics
10th	Exhibit Might
15th	Emboldened Strike
18th	Warcry of the Zhentarim

INSTILL FEAR

3RD-LEVEL ZHENTILAR'S FINEST FEATURE

You've internalized the teachings of the Zhentarim to strike fear into your enemies while never showing fear yourself. As a bonus action on your turn, you can force a creature you can see that you dealt damage to this turn to make a Wisdom saving throw. The DC equals 10 or half of the damage you dealt, whichever number is higher. If the creature fails the save, it falls prone and is frightened for 1 minute.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

INTIMIDATION TACTICS

7TH-LEVEL ZHENTILAR'S FINEST FEATURE

You've learned how to carry yourself in and out of battle to "encourage" others to see your way of thinking. Whenever you make a Charisma (Intimidation) check, you gain a bonus to the check equal to your Strength modifier. In addition, you can use your bonus action to force a creature you can see within 30 feet of you to make a Charisma (Intimidation) check contested by your Charisma (Intimidation) check. If you succeed, the creature's next attack is reduced by the difference between your checks.

You can use this bonus action a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

EXHIBIT MIGHT

10TH-LEVEL ZHENTILAR'S FINEST FEATURE

You wield your weapon to not just harm your enemies, but to utterly destroy their psyche. When you attack a target that is frightened of you, your weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20. When you score a critical hit on a creature that is frightened of you, it suffers the following additional effects until the end of its next turn:

- ☠ The creature has disadvantage on Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma saving throws.
- ☠ The creature's movement speed becomes 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed.

EMBOLDENED STRIKE

15TH-LEVEL ZHENTILAR'S FINEST FEATURE

You take advantage of the moment of panic your enemies experience when they see you in battle. Immediately after you cause a creature within 5 feet of you to become frightened, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against it, provided you can see it. On this attack, when you roll a 1 on a damage die, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

WARCRY OF THE ZHENTILARIM

18TH-LEVEL ZHENTILAR'S FINEST FEATURE

You have a voice to command legions of loyal Zhentarim into battle, crying for war in such a way that no enemy feels safe. Your Zhentarim's Finest features that impose the frightened condition can do so even on creatures that are normally immune to the frightened condition, such as mindless Undead or Constructs.

Additionally, you can use your action to strike fear in the hearts of your foes. When you do so, each hostile creature within 60 feet of you that can see or hear you must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Charisma modifier (your choice). On a failed save, a creature becomes frightened for the next minute. While frightened, it has disadvantage on Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma saving throws, its movement speed becomes 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turn, ending the effect early on a success. Once you use this action, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

ROGUE: SPELL SLAYER

Spell Slayers came to existence out of necessity. These bands of like-minded scoundrels, assassins, and thieves saw all the liches who rose to power, emboldened by Vecna's return, and simply knew what must be done. To successfully defeat a spellcaster of any kind, you must first study much like a wizard does—if only to use those lessons against them.

Rogues who walk the path of the Spell Slayer have seen the utter devastation that powerful magic can cause, and they've made it their purpose to ensure none abuse such arcane power. Children might tell tales of ghosts and shadows in the night, but wizards spend their nights scared of the possibility that a Spell Slayer might be lurking around that next corner.

SPELL SLAYER FEATURES

Rogue Level	Features
3rd	Shatter Concentration, Know Thy Enemy
9th	Stolen Magic
13th	Arcane Contingency
17th	Sever the Weave

SHATTER CONCENTRATION

3RD-LEVEL SPELL SLAYER FEATURE

You can strike with such precision as to disrupt the concentration of even the most mentally resolved spellcasters. Immediately after you deal your Sneak Attack damage to a creature that is currently concentrating on a spell or effect, you can increase the DC of its Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration on the spell or effect (no action required). The DC increases by half your rogue level (rounded up).

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

RULES TIP: IDENTIFYING SPELLS

The Spell Slayer rogue relies on some of the optional rules presented within *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* regarding how a creature can identify a spell as it's being cast, or an effect after it has been cast.

When Arcane Contingency refers to identifying a spell, a character can use their reaction to identify a spell as it's being cast, or they can use an action on their turn to identify a spell by its effect after it's cast. If the character perceived the casting, the spell's effect, or both, the character can make an Intelligence (Arcana) check with the reaction or action. The DC equals 15 + the spell's level. If the spell is cast as a class spell and the character is a member of that class, the check is made with advantage.

Additionally, if the spell being cast is one that the character knows, they can automatically identify the spell being cast.

KNOW THY ENEMY

3RD-LEVEL SPELL SLAYER FEATURE

You've spent countless hours studying spellcasters of all kinds to ensure you're never surprised by a spell. You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill if you don't already have it. In addition, you can use your reaction to make an Intelligence (Arcana) check to identify a spell as it's being cast. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level, and you make the check with advantage.

STOLEN MAGIC

9TH-LEVEL SPELL SLAYER FEATURE

You learn not only how to break a caster's concentration, but to outright steal it temporarily. When you cause a creature to lose concentration on a spell or similar effect, you can use your reaction to cast that spell or create that effect. The new spell save DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier. Regardless of the spell's normal duration, it only lasts until the end of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

ARCANE CONTINGENCY

13TH-LEVEL SPELL SLAYER FEATURE

You've seen and subjected yourself to countless spell effects to learn how to best defend against them. You gain advantage on any saving throw against a spell you've successfully identified. In addition, when you're subjected to a spell or magical effect that allows you to make a saving throw to take only half damage, you can use your reaction to instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

Once you use your reaction in this way, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

SEVER THE WEAVE

17TH-LEVEL SPELL SLAYER FEATURE

You've mastered separating the caster from their most prominent spells. When you deal Sneak Attack damage to a creature, you can force it to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier). On a failed save, the creature immediately loses concentration on any spell or effect it's concentrating on, and it can't use features or cast spells that require concentration for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect early on a success.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Losing concentration is something I'm well versed in. Liches on the other hand... What was I saying again?

- Volo

WIZARD: SCHOOL OF SECRETS

Every wizard knows of the eight traditional schools of magic: conjuration, necromancy, evocation, abjuration, transmutation, divination, enchantment, and illusion. But another school believes it holds mastery over all others: the School of Secrets. Why dedicate yourself to one discipline, each with its hidden faults, when you could simply undermine all of them by exposing their darkest secrets?

Wizards who follow the teachings of the School of Secrets traditionally fall into one of two camps: servants of Vecna or his bitter enemies. It's true that the School of Secrets was originally Vecna's creation, but not even Vecna can keep a secret this good hidden forever.

SCHOOL OF SECRETS FEATURES

Wizard Level	Features
2nd	Observe Weakness, Deceit's Demise
6th	Bestow Vulnerability
10th	Absolute Disclosure
14th	Expose Secrets



A MAGE OF THE SCHOOL OF SECRETS HIDING THEIR IDENTITY

OBSERVE WEAKNESS

2ND-LEVEL SCHOOL OF SECRETS FEATURE

After a lifetime of discovering or prying secrets from people, you've magically honed your judgment of others' character (or lack thereof). As a bonus action, you can size up a creature you can see within 60 feet, learning its two lowest ability scores and any vulnerabilities it has.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

DECEIT'S DEMISE

2ND-LEVEL SCHOOL OF SECRETS FEATURE

You can tell when someone is withholding information. You gain proficiency in the Insight skill if you don't already have it. You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks to determine whether someone is lying to you. In addition, you have advantage on any saving throws against effects that compel you to speak the truth.

BESTOW VULNERABILITY

6TH-LEVEL SCHOOL OF SECRETS FEATURE

You've mastered exposing a foe's secrets, leaving them devastated and vulnerable. As an action, choose one creature you can see within 60 feet of you that can see or hear you. It must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw against your spell save DC or gain a vulnerability to a damage type of your choice. The vulnerability lasts for 1 minute or until it takes damage of that type from you.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier, and you regain all expended uses of it when you finish a long rest.

ABSOLUTE DISCLOSURE

10TH-LEVEL SCHOOL OF SECRETS FEATURE

No matter how deeply others keep their darkest secrets locked away, you know how to find the key. You can use an action to compel a creature you can see within 30 feet of you that shares a language with you to reveal a dark secret it holds. The creature makes your choice of a Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC as you shape your argument against its weakness. The creature has advantage on its save if you or your companions are fighting it. If it fails the saving throw, it immediately discloses its darkest secret. After it does so, the creature knows it was forced to disclose a secret to you.

EXPOSE SECRETS

14TH-LEVEL SCHOOL OF SECRETS FEATURE

Everyone has a secret that, if exposed, will utterly ruin their psyche. As an action, you can choose a creature you can see within 60 feet of you. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become stunned. While stunned in this way, a creature takes 4d6 psychic damage at the end of each turn, after which it can make a Wisdom saving throw to end the stunned effect. The DC of this saving throw equals 30 – the psychic damage dealt that turn by this feature. The effect ends automatically if the creature takes damage from a source other than this feature.

Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

HEROIC CHRONICLES

Chapter 1 of *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* presents “This Is Your Life,” an excellent tool for creating characters with ties to the world around them. The following section is designed to be used in conjunction with it, aiding players and Dungeon Masters alike in developing interesting player characters, allies, and archvillains with sinister secrets that can add depth to (or prove to be the undoing of) any character. After all, in a realm ruled by a dark god of secrets, secrets are the premium currency.

Roll on the tables to flesh out a character's dark secrets, fateful moments, and much more. Of course, if a result doesn't fit your mental image for your character, there's no harm in rerolling or simply choosing. The Heroic Chronicle is a useful guide and nothing more.

Players should consult their Dungeon Master before creating a character with fateful moments and secrets. These sections can significantly impact the campaign and potentially grant additional proficiencies, spells, or feats.

SOCIAL STATUS RELATIONSHIPS

d20	Background	Bregan D'aerthe	Cult of the Dragon	Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye	Vecna's Alliance	Zariel's Legion	Zhentarim
1	Acolyte	1 ally	-	-	1 ally and 1 rival	-	-
2	Acolyte (Draconic)*	-	1 ally	1 rival	1 rival	1 ally	-
3	Acolyte (Elemental)*	-	1 rival	1 ally	1 rival	-	-
4	Charlatan	1 ally and 1 rival	-	-	-	-	1 rival
5	Criminal	1 rival	-	-	-	1 ally	1 ally
6	Criminal (Freedom Fighter)*	1 ally	-	-	1 rival	-	1 rival
7	Entertainer	1 ally	-	-	1 rival	-	1 ally
8	Folk Hero	-	-	-	1 rival	-	1 ally
9	Folk Hero (Villain)*	1 rival	-	-	1 ally	1 ally	-
10	Guild Artisan	1 ally	-	-	-	-	1 ally and 1 rival
11	Hermit	1 ally	-	1 rival	-	-	-
12	Noble	-	-	-	1 ally and 1 rival	-	1 rival
13	Outlander	-	-	1 ally and 1 rival	-	1 ally and 1 rival	-
14	Sage	1 ally	-	-	1 rival	-	1 rival
15-16	Sailor	1 ally	-	1 rival	1 rival	-	-
17-18	Soldier	-	1 rival	-	-	1 rival	1 ally
19	Soldier (Darkhold)*	1 rival	-	-	1 ally	-	1 ally
20	Urchin	1 ally	-	-	-	1 ally	1 rival

* This background is presented later in this chapter.

SOCIAL STATUS

We all have our place in the world, defined by the circumstances of our birth, the choices we make, friends we align ourselves with, and those we cross. Use the Social Status table to select your background and determine what allies or rivals you may have across the factions of the **DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS**. Certain backgrounds might naturally invite friendships and rivalries to form—even with the best of intentions, you're likely to ruffle a few feathers.

HOME SETTLEMENT

Home is where the heart is, even if that home or heart is broken. Use this table to find where your character was born or raised.

Certain cities have grown exceedingly dangerous since the fall of the Sword Coast, notably Evernight and Helldoor's Gate. If you rolled one of these cities, or otherwise feel your background might make your hometown hazardous for you, roll on the Hostile City Lifestyles table to determine what life is like for you there.

DOOMED SWORD COAST SETTLEMENTS

d20	Settlement Name	Type
1-4	Darkhold	City
5	Evernight	City (derelict)
6-7	Helldoor's Gate	City (warfront)
8	Icewind Dale	Wasteland
9-10	Qu'madosfan Delmah	City (fleet of ships)
11-12	Soaring Citadel of the Dragon Queen	Town
13-14	Throne of Primordial Unity	Town
15-18	Waterdeep	City
19	A small village, now destroyed	Village
20	A backwater town, largely unaffected by change	Town

HOSTILE CITY LIFESTYLES

d10	Hostile City Lifestyle
1	Concealed within the city
2-5	Captured by the city, gain one fateful event
6-9	Held as a personal servant, slave, or warrior
10	Earned right to stay, gain one fateful event

FAMILY

Family is a bond that can strengthen and wane throughout your life, pulling you to greater heights or dragging you back home again and again. We don't get to choose our family; the ruin of the world might have brought you closer together or tested the limits of your love and respect for one another. In these trying times, families have grown smaller, and almost everyone has a story of some personal loss.

Roll on the Family Member Fates and Family Relationships tables for each family member to determine the nature of your relationship (or choose options that give your character a reason to scour the Realms).

FAMILY MEMBER FATES

d10	Family Member Fate
1-2	Confirmed deceased, gain one fateful event
3-5	Missing
6-7	Captured, gain one fateful event
8-10	Living and safe

The many antics of my life have left me without a traditional family. I suspect it's a little late to settle down now, except perhaps into a grave.
- Volo

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

d10	Relationship
1	You and this family member were separated years ago, whether by accident or otherwise. They were too young to recall the specifics, but one detail is crystal clear to them: you left them behind. You gain one rival.
2	You and this family member disagreed about what was best for your family. Whether you chose to flee from the life you had or fight to preserve it, they adamantly opposed your decision. You gain one rival.
3	This family member used to idolize you, believing you could do no wrong. They had aspirations to follow in your footsteps, and when you instead encouraged them to seek their own path, they thought you believed they were never good enough. They intend to prove you wrong. You gain one rival.
4	This family member believes the world fell apart due to your negligence or actions. They refuse to see reason on the matter. You gain one rival.
5	You and this family member are estranged, and each of you only checks in to see if you're still doing better than the other. You revealed some secret about them that derailed their life, and they wish to repay the misdeed in kind. You gain one rival.
6	You and this family member have grown distant. They aren't the same person you grew up knowing, but neither are you. Who can say if they'll help you out in times of need? You gain one ally.
7	You and this family member are each other's biggest supporters. When everyone else told them they couldn't succeed, you were there to build their confidence. No matter what you want to do, they've got your back. You gain one ally.
8	You and this family member share a special bond. They see you as a younger version of themselves and do everything in their power to help you avoid the mistakes they made. You gain one ally.
9	You helped this family member out in a time of dire need. They owe you their life, fortune, or something smaller—but they hate being indebted to you and await the chance to finally call things even. You gain one ally.
10	This family member has always loved you unconditionally. They would give you the entire world if you asked. You gain one ally.

ACQUIRED ALLIES AND RIVALS

You can measure a life lived by the number of other lives affected (for better or worse) by your actions, the friends who stood beside you, and the enemies who opposed you. Allies and rivals can take all forms, whether spurred on by an obligation of duty, an unpaid debt, or unrequited love.

If you already have allies and rivals from the "Social Status" section, you can roll on this table to determine the nature of your relationships. If you didn't use that section, you can create some NPCs with personal connections to your character. Develop 1d4 – 1 allies and 1d4 – 1 rivals by rolling on the Ally Relationships and Rival Relationships tables.

These only define your relationship at the start of a campaign—nothing is more thrilling than a tale of a friend who becomes a foe or vice versa.

Once you've chosen an ally or rival's relationship, use the subsequent tables to determine the faction they belong to, the role they play in that faction, and the stat block for that NPC. If you wish, you can also use these subsequent tables to further develop your family members.

A good way to live your life is to have two allies for every rival. I had the inverse... which didn't work out too well.

- Volo

ALLY RELATIONSHIPS

d10 Relationship

- 1 This person (through magic beyond their comprehension) is actually a future version of you. They try to offer guidance but keep their distance to keep their identity safe.
- 2 This person was on the verge of death when you miraculously saved them. They believe you to be an angel in disguise from the Seven Heavens.
- 3 You and this person were once rivals who clashed frequently in battle, but when you had the chance to slay them, you instead spared them. They've since put your differences aside due to their respect for you.
- 4 You and this person were once in love but broke it off on mutual terms. Feelings still linger on one or both your parts, and they can't stop themselves from helping you.
- 5 This person helped you in a time of need with no expectation of being repaid. To this day, they occasionally check in on you and assist when they can.
- 6 You and this person both survived a cataclysmic event (such as a city invasion, Vecna's return, etc.). You bonded over the weeks that followed as you did whatever was necessary to endure.
- 7 You caught this person breaking a law or oath, but instead of turning them in, you promised to keep their secret. They may not be particularly fond of you, but they can't risk their secret being known.
- 8 This person needed help understanding local laws and traditions. You were one of the few people to explain, and now they rely on you if they have questions. In exchange, they've got your back.
- 9 You and this person have ended up in the same place far too often for it to be mere coincidence. You both may joke about it, but it seems your fates are deeply intertwined.
- 10 This person knows a dark secret about you—one that even you don't know. They don't know how to talk about it with you, but they choose to help you however they can.

RIVAL RELATIONSHIPS

d10 Relationship

- 1 This person believes that your actions have prevented them from getting a promotion or being noticed in their faction or line of work.
- 2 This person believes you're stronger than them, and they refuse to rest until they best you in every possible way: physically, emotionally, and socially.
- 3 You and this person were once close, but as the world crumbled, you weren't there for them. Now they resent you and want to see you fail.
- 4 This person has secretly known you for your entire life, but you've never encountered them once. From a place of unhealthy obsession, they pull the strings on your life.
- 5 This person, through no fault of their own, is sent after or desires the exact same things as you. Though they otherwise bear you no ill will, their life hinges on their success.
- 6 This person thinks you're not who you say you are. They intend to take every opportunity to expose your secrets and schemes.
- 7 This person gave you a chance to be their ally, but you refused. They'll ensure you rue the day that you ever turned down their hospitality.
- 8 You and this person were once friends or lovers, but they choose to betray you for their own personal gain. Instead of being apologetic, they've doubled down on betraying you.
- 9 You and this person once fought and they emerged victorious, believing they had killed you. They're secretly haunted by their past actions, and they don't know you're alive.
- 10 This person believes that by capturing and delivering you to their boss, they'll be suitably rewarded or promoted.

ALLY OR RIVAL FACTIONS

d6 Faction

- 1 Bregan D'aerthe
- 2 Cult of the Dragon
- 3 Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye
- 4 Vecna's Alliance
- 5 Zariel's Legion
- 6 Zhentarim

BREGAN D'AERTHE IDENTITIES

d10 Stat Block

- 1–2 **Bandit**
- 3–4 **Swashbuckler** ^{MMM}
- 5–6 **Drow gunslinger** ^{WDH}
- 7–8 **Drow mage**; gain one fateful moment
- 9–10 **Assassin**; gain one fateful moment

CULT OF THE DRAGON IDENTITIES

d100	Stat Block
1–20	Cultist
21–40	Dragonfang
41–60	Half-red dragon veteran
61–64	Young black dragon ; gain one fateful moment
65–68	Young red dragon ; gain one fateful moment
69–72	Young blue dragon ; gain one fateful moment
73–76	Young white dragon ; gain one fateful moment
77–80	Young green dragon ; gain one fateful moment
81–84	Adult black dragon ; gain one fateful moment
85–88	Adult red dragon ; gain one fateful moment
89–92	Adult blue dragon ; gain one fateful moment
93–96	Adult white dragon ; gain one fateful moment
97–100	Adult green dragon ; gain one fateful moment

CULT OF THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE IDENTITIES

d20	Stat Block
1–4	Cultist
5–8	Druid
9	Black Earth priest ^{POA}
10	Dark Tide priest ^{POA}
11	Eternal Flame priest ^{POA}
12	Howling Hatred priest ^{POA}
13	Air elemental ; gain one fateful moment
14	Fire elemental ; gain one fateful moment
15	Earth elemental ; gain one fateful moment
16	Water elemental ; gain one fateful moment
17	Air elemental myrmidon ; gain one fateful moment
18	Fire elemental myrmidon ; gain one fateful moment
19	Earth elemental myrmidon ; gain one fateful moment
20	Water elemental myrmidon ; gain one fateful moment

VEGNA'S ALLIANCE IDENTITIES

d10	Stat Block
1–2	Acolyte
3–4	Nothic
5–6	Necromancer ^{MMM}
7–8	Warlock of the Great Old One ^{MMM} ; gain one fateful moment
9–10	Lich ; gain one fateful moment

ZARIEL'S LEGION IDENTITIES

d10	Stat Block
1–2	Cultist
3–4	Priest
5–6	Chain devil
7–8	Horned devil ; gain one fateful moment
9–10	Pit fiend ; gain one fateful moment

ZHENTARIM IDENTITIES

d10	Stat Block
1–2	Thug
3–4	Spy
5–6	Knight
7–8	Blackguard ; gain one fateful moment
9–10	Assassin ; gain one fateful moment

Life is a series of fateful moments. From those heroic moments that bards and scholars recount for hundreds of years, to the most insignificant of events that somehow shape our destiny.

- Volo

FATEFUL MOMENTS

In the heat of the moment, as adrenaline courses through your veins, anger clouds your judgment, or sorrow grips your heart, it's impossible to judge how certain events can shape our destiny. These fateful moments strike suddenly and leave ripples throughout the rest of your life.

For some adventurers, a fateful moment was their call to action, driving them to a life like no other. Every character can roll on the Fateful Moments table once (rerolling duplicates), in addition to any additional fateful moments granted by remarkable allies, rivals, or other life events. If a fateful moment grants you a proficiency that you already had, choose a different proficiency of the same type (e.g., armor, skill, language, tool, or weapon).

^{MMM} Mordenkainen's Monsters of the Multiverse, ^{POA} Princes of the Apocalypse, ^{WDH} Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

FATEFUL MOMENTS

d20 Moment

- 1 You witnessed an ancient gold dragon's dying moments, and it whispered words that you couldn't comprehend—until patches of metallic scales started to form across your body. While you aren't wearing armor, your AC is 13 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.
- 2 You died. As you felt your soul dragged toward the *Soulmonger*, an unknown force saved you, reincarnating you into your current form. You suffer from a unique version of the death curse—every 30 days, your hit point maximum decreases by 1. You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice from your previous life, and your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make with it.
- 3 An impish creature approached you in a time of need, promising you the skills to avoid the perils of this land. You gain proficiency in the Perception skill, as well as darkvision out to 60 feet. Roll on the Zariel's Legion Identities table to determine the identity of your fiendish ally (you don't gain an additional fateful moment from this NPC).
- 4 You once discovered a deity's talisman, and in the events that followed, you were mysteriously saved by events that you credit to divine intervention. The talisman is now cracked slightly, but perhaps it can save you one more time before breaking. You gain proficiency in the Arcana or Religion skill (your choice).
- 5 Vecna's forces nearly captured you, but an elderly prisoner told you to stay hidden and sacrificed himself to aid your escape. You gain proficiency in the Stealth skill.
- 6 You were forced out of your home into the wilderness. The initial months were tough but you persevered. You have a tenuous alliance with a wild wolf for as long as you provide food. In addition, you gain proficiency in the Survival or Animal Handling skill (your choice).
- 7 When caught trespassing or violating the law, you lied to the authorities about your identity. While the falsehood got you out of trouble, you've been forced to maintain the lie ever since. You gain proficiency with the disguise kit and the Deception skill.
- 8 You stumbled across the corpse of a powerful wizard while escaping the enemy. You stole their spellbook—though it's magically locked and you haven't figured out how to open it yet—along with an item on their person. Roll on the Magic Item Table B in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the item (reroll if you roll a consumable item).
- 9 You enlisted in the Zhentarim's army, but after watching your mentor die in battle, you claimed their signature weapon and fled. You gain proficiency with a martial weapon of your choice, and you own that weapon.
- 10 One of your close friends was murdered in front of you. As their last action, they gave you their *stone of good luck*. Even though you sometime wonder how lucky it really is—after all, they were murdered!—you carry it in their memory.
- 11 Rather than take to arms when the world began to collapse, you dedicated your life to saving as many people as possible. You gain the Healer feat from the *Player's Handbook*.
- 12 One night, you were haunted by what felt like a never-ending nightmare. Now you occasionally experience visions of the past, both when you dream and sometimes even when you wake. You gain proficiency in the History skill.
- 13 You were accused of a crime that you didn't commit, but after a lengthy personal investigation, you discovered the true culprit, handed them over, and cleared your name. You have proficiency in the Investigation skill. In addition, the culprit vows revenge; roll on the Ally or Rival Factions table to determine that NPC's details (you don't gain an additional fateful moment from this NPC).
- 14 A mysterious stranger delivered you a book that was meant to go to Candlekeep. Upon opening its pages, you realized (albeit too late) that it was cursed as the book forced arcane knowledge upon you. You gain the benefits of the Magic Initiate feat from the *Player's Handbook*—but you're also under the effects of a random property from the Minor Detrimental Properties table in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, as if you were attuned to the book.
- 15 Your actions disrupted the careful balance of elemental harmony, and a powerful elemental will monitor you until you make it right. You know the find familiar spell and can cast it as a ritual, but your familiar always takes the form of a **mud mephit**, **smoke mephit** or **steam mephit**. In addition, you've made a rival from the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye. Roll on the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye Identities table to determine their details (you don't gain an additional fateful moment from this NPC).
- 16 You were chased by a pack of ghouls intent on eating you, and you ran as far as your legs could carry you. Even after you escaped, you never truly stopped running. You gain the benefits of the Athlete feat from the *Player's Handbook*.
- 17 You encountered someone who you believe possessed the *Eye of Vecna*. Before they vanished, they gestured you closer and handed you a "memento to never forget this encounter." Roll on the Magic Item Table B in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the item (reroll if you roll a consumable item).
- 18 While trying to escape the Sword Coast by sea, your ship sank. As you drowned, the ocean itself taunted you in a language you at first didn't understand. As your last desperate gasp filled your lungs with water, you suddenly understood its words. Moments later, the Bregan D'aerthe pulled you from the sea and resuscitated you. You know the Aquan language. In addition, roll on the Bregan D'aerthe Identities table to determine the identity of your savior (you don't gain an additional fateful moment from this NPC).
- 19 You witnessed a lich disintegrate someone. After cowering until the lich departed, you approached the pile of ash—and discovered a humanoid shadow moving. The spirit of the disintegrated individual lingered and became bound to you. You know the *unseen servant* spell and can cast it as a ritual. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for this spell. If the servant is destroyed, it can't return for 10 days.
- 20 As you fought hand to hand with a demon, your hands became covered in demonic ichor. Ever since, you've been able to grow retractable demonic claws from the tips of your fingers. The claws are natural weapons, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with them, you deal slashing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

SECRETS

Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden introduced secrets for players to weave into their characters' backstories. This gazetteer follows in that tradition. Players can choose a secret or roll randomly, and they can always reroll or reject a secret if it doesn't fit their character. Ultimately, these secrets should be fun for all players and inspire more roleplaying opportunities.

As the god of evil secrets, Vecna manipulates others' secrets while keeping his own hidden. To survive in the Doomed Sword Coast, the players should do the same. It falls to the players to guard their characters' secrets, and there should be dire consequences if their secret becomes common knowledge. For added intrigue, introduce agents who seem hell-bent on learning the party's secrets.

SECRETS

2d8 Secret

- 2 **Artifact Protector.** Before everything fell apart, I was part of a group entrusted with protecting a powerful magical item. I still know the location of this hidden artifact.
- 3 **Chosen by Deity.** I receive messages from a deity; they say it's my task to spread their teachings in secret so that they gain power. In dire situations, I can call on that deity to aid me.
- 4 **Contributor of Doom.** My actions personally contributed to one of the many disasters that doomed the Sword Coast. I hope no one survived to remember me or my misdeeds.
- 5 **Death Curse Immune.** I am mysteriously immune to the effects of the death curse. If anyone discovered this, they'd no doubt try to kill me for my blood, or worse.
- 6 **Doomsayer.** I believe the world is beyond hope. My true aim is to see it destroyed and bring an end to everything. Most would disagree with me, so I can't let them find out.
- 7 **Evil Apprentice.** In the past, I served an evil overlord. They feared I would betray them (perhaps rightfully), and I was forced to flee. As a result, I know I wizard cantrip.
- 8 **Ex-Harper Agent.** I was once a spy for the Harpers, but I fled when the odds seemed insurmountable. I still know a few Harper hideouts, but I'm sure they're all trapped or under surveillance.
- 9 **Fey-Marked.** At a young age, I ventured into the Feywild and spent years in the land of the fey. By the time I emerged, the world was vastly different, but now I can always find a fey crossing.
- 10 **Mind-Blanked Clone.** An infamous figure created me as their clone and changed my appearance. Though they wiped my memory, I still occasionally get glimpses of their memories. Once per day, I can gain advantage on an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (History) check as I tap into my brain's latent knowledge.

- 11 **Pirate Brand.** I once sailed with the Bregan D'aerthe fleet, but they exiled me for piracy, vowing to kill me if I'm ever spotted in the Sea of Swords again. My chest still bears a brand they marked me with.
- 12 **Soul Debt.** I've sold my soul to a devil, and when I die, I'm doomed to join Zariel's Legion. I have advantage on all Charisma checks involving fiends.
- 13 **Timelost.** After discovering an obelisk, I was whisked from my life a thousand years ago into this doomed future. Everyone I know is long dead and only I know the location of this obelisk.
- 14 **Visions from Tharizdun.** I have visions of the Abyss, of being imprisoned beneath the earth, and of a silver moon, but I've become numb to their horrors. I have advantage on saving throws against effects that would make me frightened.
- 15 **Magical Compulsion.** I once was magically compelled to do something unspeakably evil. Ever since, I've steeled my mind to resist falling for it again. Once per day, I can gain advantage on a saving throw against a magical effect that would charm me.
- 16 **Haunted Past.** I fled to the Sword Coast to escape a debt. Facing dragons, undead, and worse was more palatable than facing my wrongs. If captured, I'd be used as a bargaining chip to my debtors.



SOME OF VECNA'S MOST WELL-GUARDED SECRETS ARE EXACTLY WHO AND WHAT IS LOYAL TO THE WHISPERED ONE

Secrets irk me to no end. Knowledge should be shared for all! But even so, perhaps some things are best left unspoken.

- Volo

BACKGROUNDS

This section presents alternate background features to reflect life in a world where evil runs amok.

ACOLYTE

One of Vecna's first decrees as the self-imposed Lord of Toril was to sever the connection between gods and their followers. This understandably decimated the population of acolytes. Now most who remain follow Vecna's teachings or one of the two major cults in the Sword Coast.

Alternative Feature: Draconic Cultist. Whether or not you still hold to those beliefs, your experience as a devout follower of Tiamat grants you understanding of their organization and how best to avoid the ire of a dragon. You easily identify other followers of Tiamat and can invoke religious rites to exert influence over lower-ranked cultists.

Alternative Feature: Elemental Cultist. Whether or not you still hold to those beliefs, your experience in the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye has granted you the skills to traverse the harshest conditions. You become a natural wilderness guide, skilled in identifying typical dangers (steep cliffs, underwater currents, blistering winds, or forest fires) and valuable resources.

CHARLATANS

Charlatans of the Doomed Sword Coast haven't changed much, except in how abundant they now are. In all walks of life, there are always going to be those who lie, cheat, and steal to make it through each day.

CRIMINAL

Criminals thrive throughout the land, stealing from the needy, the needless, and everyone in between. Many have graduated from skulking in the shadows to being an official blackmailer, hired killer, or fence.

Alternative Feature: Freedom Fighter. The outlaws of this land are the heroes of old who try to save the day or break up the status quo. Your heroics have branded you a criminal in the eyes of Vecna's laws. If you find yourself in a dire situation, there is still a flicker of hope in the common folk who are willing to aid you or make sacrifices to ensure you succeed.

ENTERTAINER

Tyrants have no tolerance for satirists and jesters. Most entertainers make a living spreading only the messages the overlords approve of.

Alternative Feature: Public Executioner. You have experience doing macabre work that invokes fear, anger, and sometimes even celebration within

the populace. In exchange for doing this dirty work, local authorities give you legal leeway and decent pay. Occasionally your profession can be used to intimidate citizens, lest they become a central piece of your next "performance."

FOLK HERO

The world hardly has enough citizens, let alone those willing to risk becoming a few heroes. The closest to heroes the world has now are a few grizzled survivors or broken has-beens.

Alternative Feature: Folk Villain. Unlike the rustic hospitality that any folk hero would expect, your past actions strike fear (you would call it "respect") into the heart of common folk. You can extract tribute and concessions, but go too far and you might have an angry mob on your hands.

GUILD ARTISAN

Many of the established guilds crumbled along with the civilizations that traded their goods. Everything that remains is a crude knockoff of what it used to be, but a few trades are even more coveted than before.

Alternative Feature: Lost Art. You know how to make something so rare and valuable that people will always offer the most coin, information, supplies, or support they can afford in exchange for your craft.

HERMIT

Civilizations became dangerous almost overnight as people were forced from their homes into the wilderness. Some without surviving families became hermits, disconnecting themselves entirely to avoid all the horror.

Alternative Feature: Untouched Haven. During a period of seclusion, you built or found a natural haven that appears to be entirely undiscovered and untouched by the world's destruction. It could be a natural grove, cavern, or beachfront where a small settlement could live somewhat comfortably.

NOBLE

When the forces of evil crept into the high places of the Sword Coast, the ruling class had to decide: make a stand, or align themselves with the new powers? Suffice to say the only nobles still around are those who chose the latter.

Alternative Feature: Advantageous Blackmail. Thanks to countless schmoozing events and careful conversations, you've harvested a network of incriminating secrets. This leverage can be used to gain access to one or more minor nobles in most settlements. Use caution, however; you can only bend someone's will so much before it snaps back at you.

OUTLANDER

Many people believed they could weather an apocalypse, but very few actually had the survival skills and wherewithal to do it. If you find a body in the woods, you can be sure it wasn't a true outsider.

SAGE

Knowledge is power, and Vecna enslaves countless sages to scour the libraries of the Sword Coast for it. Others use their scholarly training to bury snippets of information that the Whispered One doesn't know, hoping to one day use that information against him somehow.

SAILOR

Some sailors were among the first to raise anchor and leave the Sword Coast for brighter shores. Others learned sailing because a crew won't take on freeloaders.

SOLDIER

The Sword Coast's armies were fundamentally ill-equipped for Tiamat or Vecna's return. How does your standard soldier stand toe-to-toe with a dragon or undead horde? They don't. Most soldiers that remain are deserters or are still fighting a war they lost years ago.

Alternative Feature: Forged in Darkhold. Years of deliberate training, honing your mind and body into a weapon to be used against the Zhentarim's foes, have prepared you for the doomed world. When spotting enemy forces from afar, you can anticipate what their strategy might entail and plan suitable countermeasures. Outside of battle, while in Zhentarim-owned settlements, you have significant freedom to do as you please, provided it doesn't clash with other Zhents.

URCHIN

Even cities teeming with undead still have people who escape daily notice, rummaging through the streets and alleyways.

Alternative Feature: Shared Strife. Your experiences on the harsh streets taught you that urchins survive only by sharing warnings with one another. You can communicate with fellow urchins to uncover the most significant cause of unhappiness in the area and key information about it.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

THE END HAS COME

DOOMED FORGOTTEN REALMS: SWORD COAST GAZETTEER

is a reimagining of the Forgotten Realms in which every worst possible outcome became a reality. The demons claimed the Underdark, Baldur's Gate was dragged into hell, Auril froze over all of Icewind Dale, and Tiamat was summoned to rain down terror. In the Doomed Forgotten Realms, all the adventuring heroes failed, slain in their conquest—or no one ever answered the call for aid. However, there is always the faintest glimmer of hope for good to emerge victorious at the end of the day.

Inside this gazetteer, you'll find:

- Details of the six major factions that now rule the Sword Coast.
- A complete retelling of the Sword Coast, but not as you know it.
- Campaign hooks from 1st to 20th level.
- 5 new subclasses including the College of the Elements and the School of Secrets.
- New backgrounds and a heroic chronicle for creating characters in this cursed world.

QUILL & CAULDRON